

# IN NORTHERN LABRADOR

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WILLIAM BROOKS CABOT

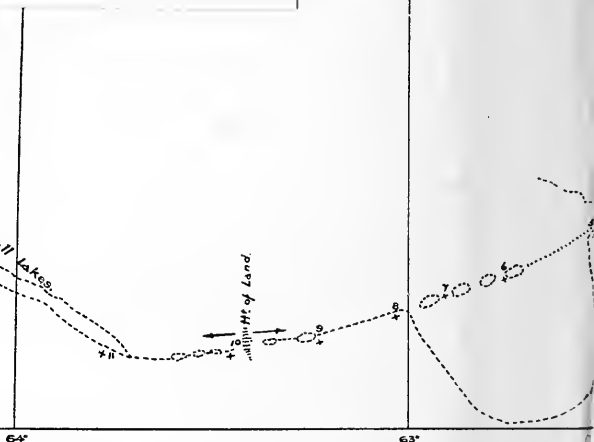
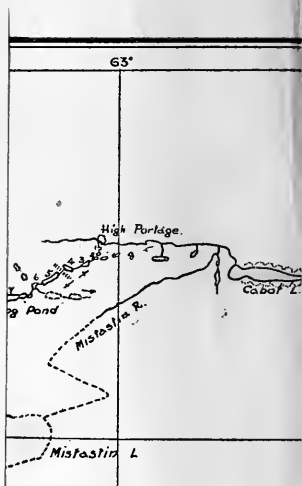
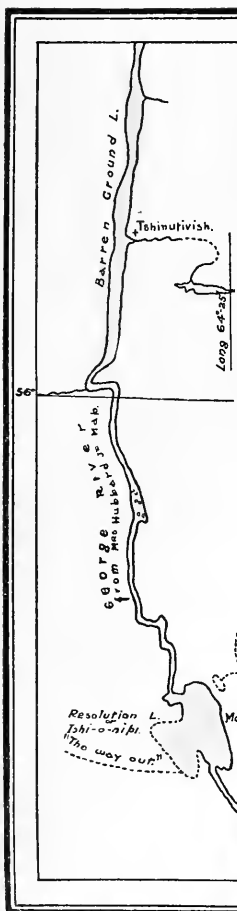


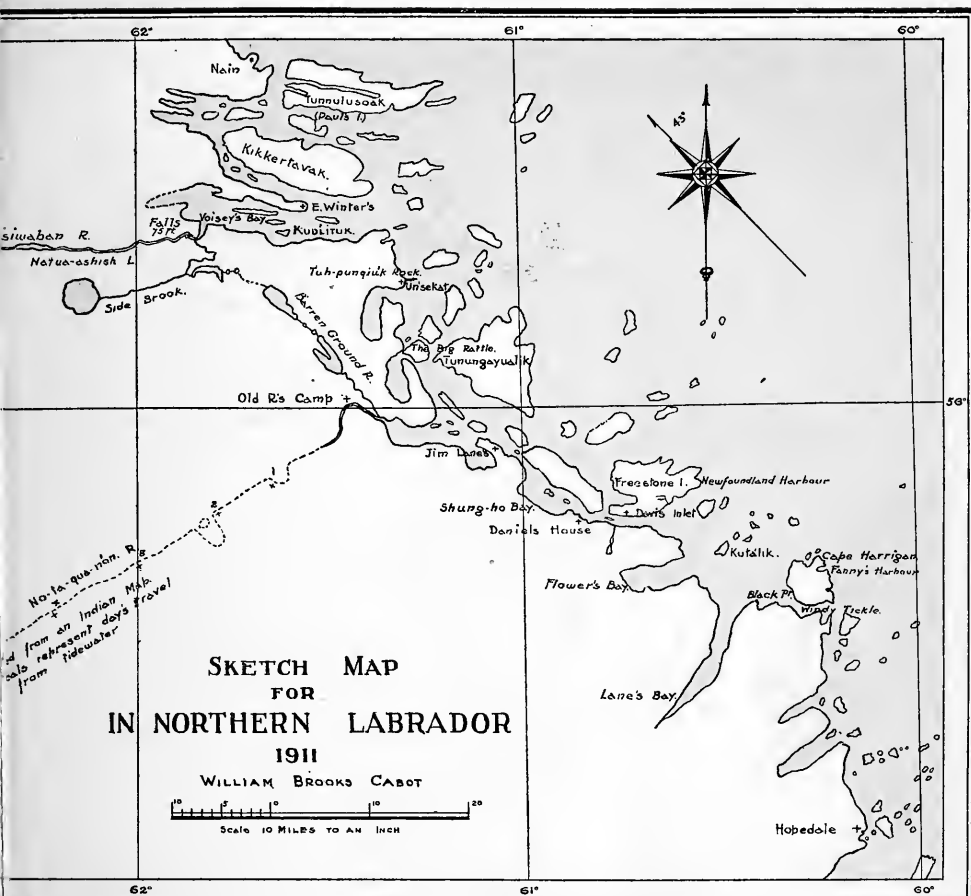
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IN NORTHERN LABRADOR







NASKAPI

# In Northern Labrador

WILLIAM B. CABOT

*With many illustrations  
from photographs*



RICHARD G. BADGER

The Gorham Press

BOSTON

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## PREFACE

IT has been said by some one, within recent years, that all the places now unexplored were so miserably bad that no one would care to have anything to do with them. The caribou country of northeastern Labrador may or may not be an exception to this rule. There are worse regions to wander in. Moreover, the people are to be considered. Not every one cares for native races, but most wilderness travelers do. I have myself found the Labrador people well worth while.

The Indian names I have used need some explanation. Assiwaban, the name of the fine stream the George River people come to the coast by, is pronounced As-si-wáw-ban. It means "Waiting place," from a deer pass near the coastal height of land where the Indians camp and wait for the migration to come from north. The river, or brook, as the shore whites call these larger streams, is best known to the bay people as Frank's Brook, from the name of a one-time resident near its mouth. These personal names given to bays and rivers are more or less subject to change, accordingly as the settlers change and succeed one another. One year the river may be Smith's, another year Jones's, and in due time, perhaps, Robinson's. I have taken pleasure in rescuing the names of some of these clear Indian rivers, particularly the Assiwaban, and the Nó-ta-qua-nón, from the ignominy of shifting white nomenclature. Likewise I have used the Eskimo name O-pe-tik Bay for the Merryfield Bay of Low's map, partly

because the latter name is not used now, even by the shore people, who have reverted to the ancient designation, never in fact abandoned by them, of Opetik.

Mistastin means, as nearly as our clumsy outdoor English permits, "Where the wind blows everything off the ground," that is, moss and trash and light soil.

The personal names are mostly explained in the text. Kámoques is pronounced in three syllables. In Ashimáganish the accented *a* is like *a* in father. I am sorry to say that the name of old Nijwa is incorrect, although Nijwa is something like it. The meaning of her actual name is Snipe, yellow-leg snipe. Ah-pe-wát, as well Ah-pe-wót, means an imbedded pebble, as in pudding-stone. "You know the little stones that grow inside a rock?" said old E., my chief source of information in such matters, "They are Ah-pe-wát." As to Pi-á-shun-a-hwáo, who by the way is a worthy son of the great chief at Ungava, old E. explained, "When you shoot anything handy, that's Pi-á-shun-a-hwáo." The *a* in the first and last syllables of P.'s name is long, as in fate; the other *a* might be *o* or *uh*.

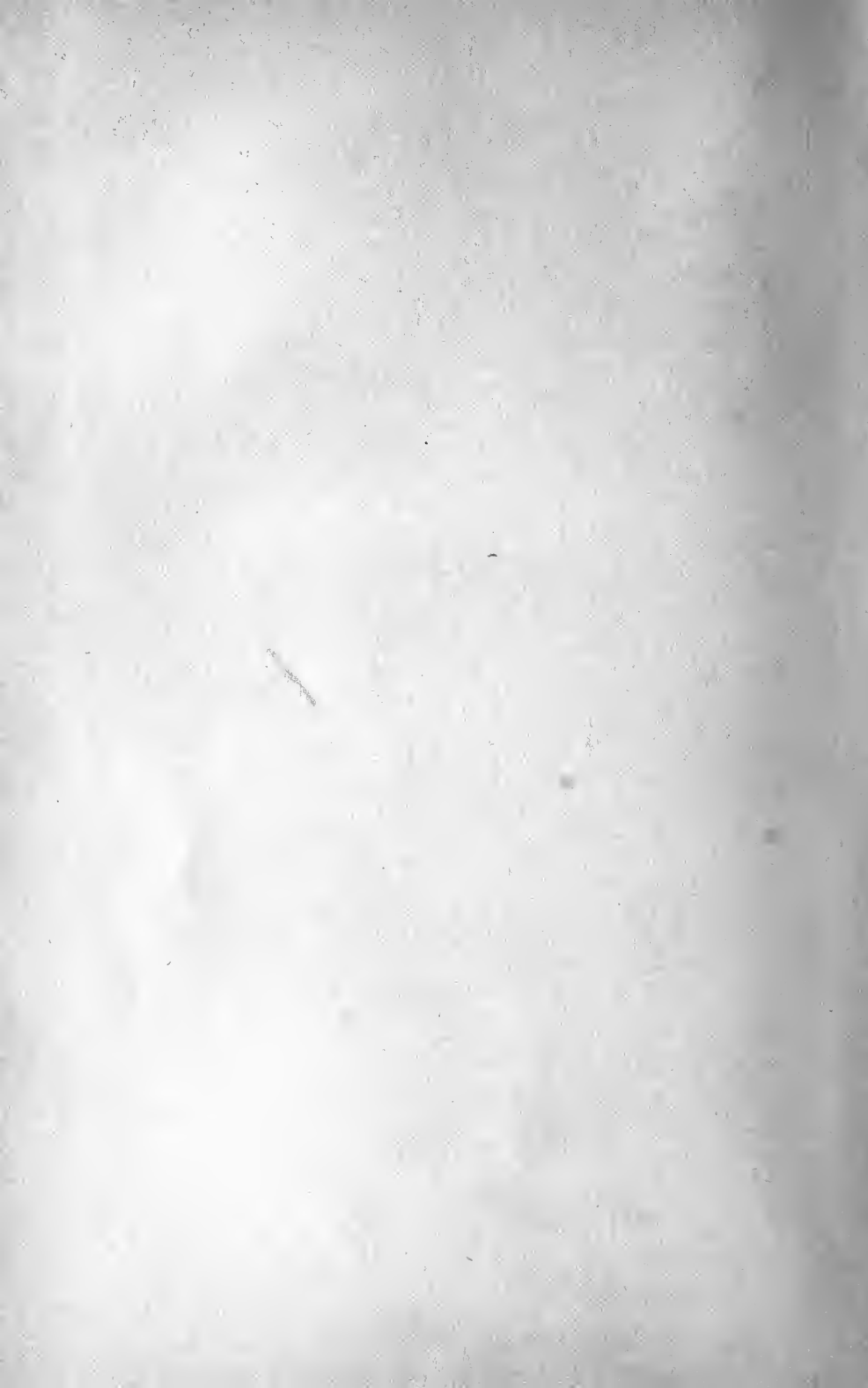
One or two English names I have changed, for reasons which are commonplace. One cannot be wholly unrestrained when writing of living people. The happenings related, however, if not exciting, are at least true. I wish I had felt competent to deal with the subject of Dr. Grenfell's remarkable mission work, as well as that of the Moravians. I owe much to the kindness of both establishments.

The map inserted is rather a sketch. The coast is taken mainly from the sea chart, a poor reliance. Inland the distances are only estimated, and the courses taken with a small hunting com-

pass, but the longitude  $64^{\circ} 25'$ , at the west end of the portage between the Kanekautsh lakes, should be a pretty good one. It fixes the position of the George River ten or eleven miles west, a rather important matter. I should not care, however, to insist upon the exactness of even this observation, as it is not easy to keep one's timepiece steady in such rough travel as was involved. Still we had three good watches carefully rated.

The Montagnais route by the No-ta-quanón is, of course, not drawn to scale. Like all Indian maps, it is made only to travel by. For this purpose, however, their maps are often better than ours. One needs to be used to their method.

I have named the regular Indian height of land crossing at the head of Hawk Lake, the Quackenbush Pass; the fine trap headland at the west end of Mistastin Lake, Walcott Dyke, and the low but commanding hill at the outlet of Mistinipi, and from which Dr. Howe and I took observations in 1910, Howe Hill.



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IN NORTHERN LABRADOR



# IN NORTHERN LABRADOR

## *Chapter I*

### LABRADOR

**I**NTERIOR Labrador, if a country of severe winter conditions, and not too easy to travel in at any time, is not quite the desolation it is generally believed to be. Unavailable for most purposes it is, even as regions of its rather high latitudes go, and of course an utter wilderness, but its name is worse than it deserves. The peninsula is seldom cold in summer, and if its rivers were less difficult it would be more widely known as a field of travel; and also, from its great extent, as a nearly inexhaustible one. As it is, however, the usual summer wanderer is not in a way to make much impression upon its spaces. Nor, after all, does such a country appeal to the many. It is too elemental a land.

The long Atlantic coast of the peninsula, rocky, berg sentineled, and barren, has failed in the eyes of navigators from the first. To hardy Leif Ericson it appeared a "land good for nothing"; he called it Helluland, "Flat-stone land," and sailed away. Worse yet was old Jacques Cartier's oft-quoted title, "The land which God gave Cain"; a sincerity, touched by whatever of temperament, which brooks no counter. He spoke as he saw. But it is to be remembered that Jacques Cartier was born to sunny France, and saw only the blasted outer shores of the peninsula — perhaps in one of its sunless, harder moods. It is fortunately true that the exposed coasts of the world are not always to be taken as an index

of what is to be found within, and the coasts of Cartier's bitter word are faced to polar blasts unbroken.

The trouble with interior Labrador, the great tableland, is less climatic than geological; it has little soil. The last ice-cap, which left the country only a little time since, as things go, ground away the rocks, already old, to their hard, unweathering base; and upon this foundation soil makes but slowly. If there were enough soil almost the whole tableland would be forested high.

Yet climate brought the ice-cap, and climate has played its full part. The present period finds the peninsula surrounded by cold seas, ice locked for many months of the year, never ice free excepting on the very south. The winds from all shores are cold. What the aspect of the country was when the broad interior sea from Hudson's Bay south, the Central Sea, made for warmer currents, none can now say. There has been time and change enough for anything. This long-enduring land, one of the oldest primal faces of the globe, may have been the cradle of the human race. It lies in moderate latitudes, little as this may have counted in the past, for coal and fern fossils are found still farther to the north. England, with its scarce-freezing winters, lies level to the east; the extreme of Scotland is broad off the swirling ice fields of Ungava Bay, as high in latitude, almost, as the farthest northern extension of the peninsula. The northern limit of Labrador's main body is only the parallel of 60°, a parallel which in many places cuts through settled lands, through waving wheatfields often, around the world.

In the earlier ages of the unchanging old

peninsula its territorial neighbors were only in the building. Other lands, far and near, were made and unmade, the sea came and the sea went, while this old cornerpost of the continent held its ancient place, not much changed in outline, but wearing, wearing, wearing down through inconceivable time. Wide were the transformations of other areas of the hemisphere, and by comparison rapid, a turmoil of continental forms.

So it is that the actual age of what one now sees in the peninsula is hopelessly beyond reckoning. In valleys eroded far into the older rocks have been found deposits of the more recent Cambrian measures, laid down since the valleys were completed. The valleys had been cut down in previous ages by a process so slow that our minds fail before it. Yet this "recent" Cambrian, laid in after the valleys had reached their depth, has been thought to date back twenty-eight million years. Even then the tale is not told. The under rock, the "basement complex" of geology, is believed to have been formed from sediments too; the real foundation is below.

Now the peninsula is mainly an uneven waste of low hills and ridges. The glacial moraines and the terraced drift of the valleys bear trees only sparsely, save to the south and in low valleys near the sea. So recently was the ice-cap over all that the innumerable Indian-known lakes of the plateau have not had time to drain themselves by cutting down their outlets or to become silted up by material from higher levels. Their life falls within the historic old-world period. Six thousand years, a negligible span geologically, may well cover the time since the ice departed. Until then, while the glaciers were still moving seaward, the

coast was flanked by bergs from its own inland, and the stately procession which now passes from Baffin's Bay along the coast may have been locked in the north, or forced to a distant offing.

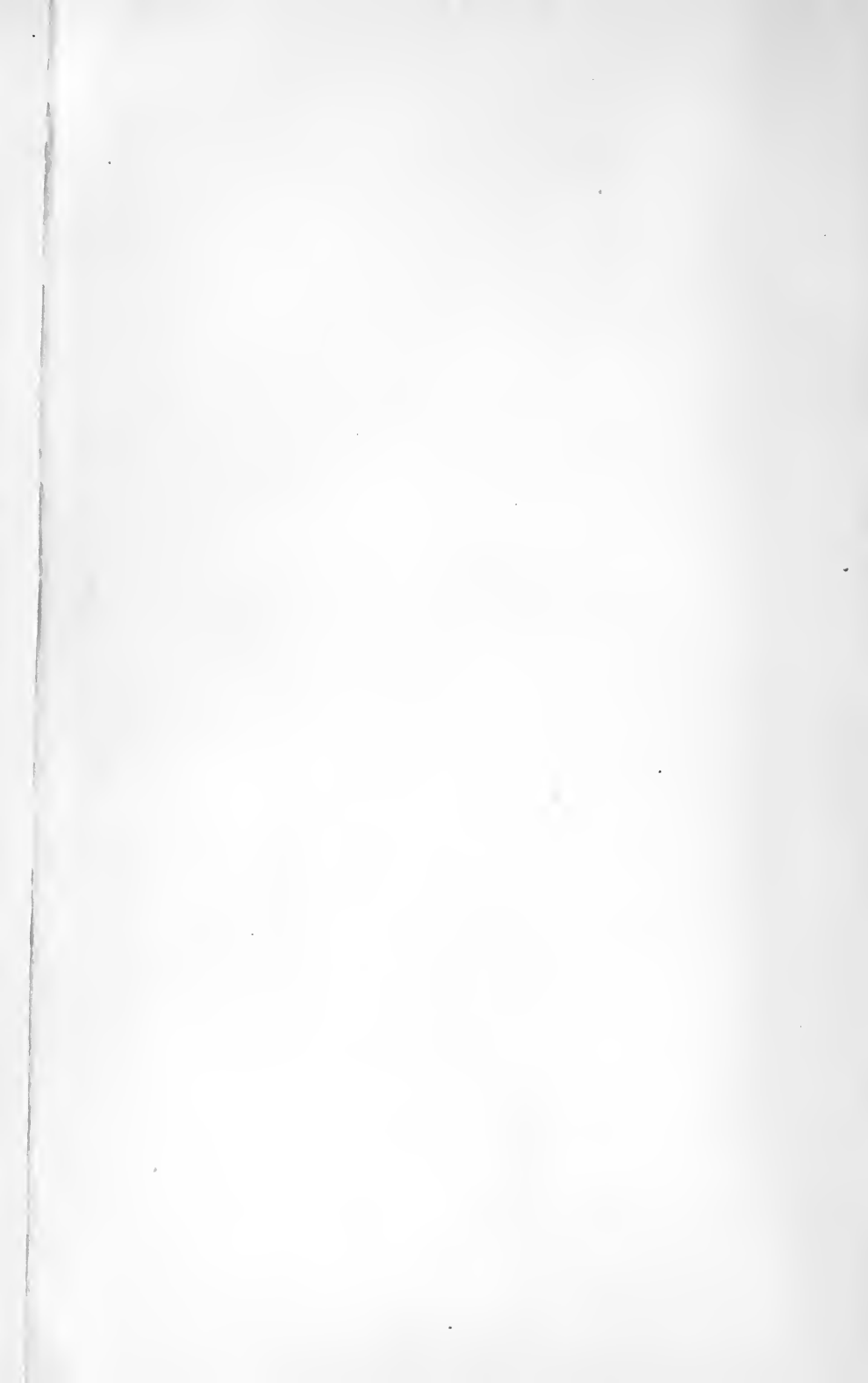
Exploitation in the modern sense has found no foothold, save for a few lumber and pulp operations in the outer valleys of the south. Minerals may well appear on the western side, difficult of access now, and there is iron in quantity on the southern slope and in the central north, but the archæan rocks of the main part of the country are not very promising otherwise. In the north-east are recent rocks of more hopeful aspect, occupying an area remarkably described by Reginald Daly, in Dr. Grenfell's "Labrador." Better opportunities for prospecting on the western side will follow the building of the Hudson's Bay railroad from Manitoba.

The ultimate future of the semi-barrens, which stretch away from the middle country to Ungava and the polar north, may be as pasture ground for domesticated reindeer, in the hands of some northern nomadic race — perhaps Lapps or the present Eskimo-white strain of the shores. Meanwhile the one product of the interior, not to be wholly superseded even if minerals are found, is fur, which will not soon fail. This is its only yield to the world. Most other regions of earth left to the hunter races are being fast invaded, they are more amenable to the modern purpose, their borders are approachable the year around. But isolated Labrador, avoided to this day in the great westward march of civilization, may yet be known as the "Last of the Fur Countries."

Whatever its economic future, the invitation of the country to the wilderness traveler, the



A GAME PASS. BEAR AND CARIBOU PATH AT MISTASTIN HEADLAND





traveler with a taste for unworn places, is unusual. Nowhere are such clear, unfished rivers, mapped and unmapped, large rivers and small; nowhere are such white-moss hills as those of the semi-barrens, velvet to the feet and fair to the eye. More than all are the lakes. Its lakes are Labrador's glory. Wide over the plateau they spread, along the watersheds and in the higher valleys. Nowhere are such lakes,—from the tiny "flashets" of the Newfoundlanders, their mission only to reflect the sky, to great Michikamau and Mistassini, with their far water horizons. Lake Mistassini, the largest, is a hundred miles long.

Nor is it easy in this day to find the primitive hunter life as unchanged over a large country as in Labrador. Over their great territory the people still wander at will, knowing no alien restraint, no law but their own. The unwritten code of the lodge and the open, the ancient beliefs, are still theirs.

Not a few districts of Labrador are still unexplored. None of them is very large unless in the far Northwest, but particularly in the central area and the northern half of the peninsula generally, there is fresh ground for the seasonal visitor, the minor explorer, for a long time to come. It is true that some of these regions are not easy of access, for the rivers are strong and the distances great, but there remain good regions which are near and accessible. It may be taken that no white man has ever crossed the country from side to side. It would be a journey of ten or twelve hundred miles. Yet, absurdly enough, several of us who go into the country are announced to have "crossed Labrador." So with Mrs. Hubbard, and Dillon Wallace, and Mr. and Mrs. Stephen

Tasker and myself. Corners of it some of us have crossed, but in trips not exceeding half the width of the main peninsula. There is a difference between being two hundred miles from a base and five.

Before the time of Low, whose report came out in 1896, it was difficult to get much information about the country, particularly the middle and northern parts. There was not much trouble about the southern slope to a distance east of the Moisie, for the main rivers had been more or less mapped. But the most interesting parts of these rivers, their upper headwaters and the lakes of their watersheds, had been left untouched. In the southwest, however, on the Saguenay branches, and on the Outardes and Maniquagan, surveys had reached farther.

There had been some other observations by good observers, though lacking instruments of precision. One of the best known of these explorations was by Henry Youle Hind, in the early sixties. He saw the fire-swept country about the head of the Moisie, and was impressed by its desolation. "Words," he wrote, "fail to describe the awful desolation of the Labrador tableland." Hind had imagination beyond most Labrador travelers, and his gatherings about the Indians, who naturally attracted him, show unusual illumination. In those days they were being forced from the ruined plateau to the Gulf shores, to perish untimely from the damp climate and unaccustomed diseases. Hind's book was long the standard upon Labrador, and is still interesting.

The lower Hamilton was visited in 1887 by Mr. R. F. Holmes, who brought away a good sketch map of the river as far as Lake Winikapau. His

objective had been the Grand Falls, then assumed to drop sheer from the plateau level of near two thousand feet elevation to the level of the sea. Deficiencies of equipment caused his early return. The falls are really a little more than three hundred feet high.

In 1891 Cary and Cole of Bowdoin College reached the falls, two hundred and fifty miles above tidewater, followed closely by Henry G. Bryant and Arthur Keniston, who measured them. While Cary and Cole were away from their boat at the falls it caught fire and burned, and they were left to make their way by a serious foot-and-raft trip to the coast. Dr. Low happened to be at Northwest River Post when they came out, looking the hard experience they had had. They came swimming across the river, some two miles wide, on a log in the remnants of their clothes. Low afterward told Stuart Cotter, a Hudson's Bay Company friend, that the unconcerned way in which they took the whole matter was extraordinary.

In the Northeast occurred the journeys of John McLean, about 1840. From Fort Chimo, on Ungava Bay, he followed the Indian route to Michikamau, thence descending past the Grand Falls to Hamilton Inlet. In 1838 he made a notable winter walk from Chimo to Northwest River, some six hundred miles, following Northwest River itself for part of its course, and returning by much the same route. The stark lifelessness of the country at times was much the same then as now. "We saw no game," was his significant remark regarding the return trip. It is unwritten history that fifty miles from Chimo the party gave out and were saved the fate of Hubbard, who in recent years met his end by

starvation on the same route, only by the efforts of an Indian, who had strength to force his way to the post and send back relief. The parallel with the case of Hubbard is singularly near, and quite identical as regards the rescue of his companion, Wallace. A white man of each party was saved by the devotion and endurance of an Indian. The occurrences were sixty-seven years apart. As to McLean's discovery of the Grand Falls, there is no reasonable doubt that they were visited some years before his time by David Dixon, or Dickson, a trader. This was told me by his grandson, whose name is Hewitt, and who now lives in Boston.

One more notable journey was made during the later period, that of Father Lacasse, who traveled with Indians in 1875 or 1876 from Northwest River Post to Chimo over substantially the same route, as far as Michikamau, followed by Dillon Wallace in 1905.

These explorers belong to quite a recent time; their period is the modern one of much writing, of reports and books and magazines; therefore we all know them. But it would not do to take their part as being more than a small proportion of the white man's wanderings that went on in the peninsula previous to the time of Low. Traders and missionaries, the latter the Jesuits and their successors, the Oblate Fathers, and before all if not through all the old *Coueurs des Bois*, traveled and drifted with the Indians from the very beginnings of the early French period. Of most of their wanderings, as of their experiences, no record exists. They always traveled with Indians, and the network of Indian routes extends to Ungava and the treeless north.

Little less negligible for present purposes were the voyagings of Hudson's Bay Company people during the long period when inland posts were maintained, for the employees of the company were enjoined to silence about the country, and what records they made are not available. Now the only remaining post of the company in the main interior is at Níchicun, near the geographical center and apex of the peninsula, and few, if any, of the Hudson's Bay Company officers at the shores are qualified to undertake inland travel. The title of "Inland Man" is all but extinct.

Such was the position of exploration to the early nineties. Until then the maps of the main part of the country showed few dependable features. Some of the principal lakes were laid down, usually wrong in place, shape, and size, and often in drainage. Likewise certain of the larger rivers, known by their estuaries at the coasts, were almost an equal credit to the draughtsman's imagination, and a firm range or two of mountains was apt to be thrown in. There was some foundation of report for most of the features shown, but to any one planning to travel in the country the maps would as well have been left blank.

Now, chiefly in the early nineties, came the real surveys of Low, to whose methods of accuracy the main tableland was as a clean page. The wide-spaced gridiron of his travel routes is shown on his well-known map of 1896. His notable journey from Lake St. John to Chimo by Mistássini, Níchicun, Kaniápishkau, and the Kóksoak remains the only diametrical crossing of the country to this time. The pace had to be unrelenting, rainy days and Sundays alike, and the expedition

only just caught the Hudson's Bay Company steamer in the fall, on its way south. The voyageurs of his principal expeditions were not Indians of the regions visited, but Montagnais from Lake St. John. Transported provisions were depended upon to the high level, where fish netted in the lakes considerably took their place. It is to be noted that in the interminable water courses of the central area local guides were absolutely necessary to his effective progress. As one of his Indians told me in later years, with the ring of appreciation, "We always had a guide!" For the want of one, in a later year, Low had to give up going from Lake Naokokán to Nichicun, only a few miles' distance. He was several days trying to find the outlet of Naokokán, the lake being large and masked by islands, and finally gave up and returned down Maniquagan River, which he had just ascended. He was short of provisions, else he would of course have made his way through, a matter only of a little more time. Afterward he learned that the outlet was very close to the inlet he had entered the lake by. In the matter of supplies a remark of his in Dr. Grenfell's "Labrador" is worth remembering: "A good supply of provisions means good-natured canoe men, willing to go anywhere without a thought of danger, whereas the suspicion of starvation will change the same men into a discontented, mutinous crew."

The most important work done since Low's return is Mrs. Hubbard's exploration of Northwest River, while scarcely less to be appreciated is her good travel map of George River. A later journey made by Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Tasker, from Richmond Gulf to Chimo, a distance of

nearly five hundred miles, required perhaps as much hardihood as any that could be named, being a single-canoe voyage in a nearly gameless country, the men of the party shadowed, moreover, by responsibility for the safety of the woman passenger. The voyageurs were George Elson and Job Chapies, men to whom was due much of Mrs. Hubbard's success in 1905.

After the completion of Low's work it was my fortune to fall upon some of his old voyageurs at Lake St. John, one of whom was John Bastian, a Scotch Montagnais now near Murray Bay. He was one of my two companions, in 1899, during a midwinter walk to Mistassini Lake, on Rupert River, the third member of the party being Robert Richards, a Scotch Cree from Hudson's Bay, and a remarkable man. He has died lately near the Saguenay River. John, the principal guide, spoke little English then, but a good deal of evening talk went on about the interior and I came into quite a little light on the country and people, including the Naskapi of the North, besides getting together a small stock of Montagnais words. The trip was my beginning in the Indian North.

Our falling together as a party, the two Indians and I, was a chance happening, yet if only from events which might be taken as in sequence, and in some sort affecting various lives, the occurrence might well have been ordered and meant to be. That initial trip was favored in all respects, and though others followed in which one or both of these men took part, up many rivers and over many heights of land, we always looked back to our first venture together as in a light of its own. In a sort it was a first experience for us all, white

and Indian; we saw with the same eyes, and passed into a relation which none of us had expected.

By the time I shifted to fresh ground in the far Northeast, and again needed their help, both men had positions as guardians of club territories, and I did not try to unsettle them. Some vicissitudes would have been spared me if I had, and as the world has gone with them their fortunes might have been none the worse. At any rate this narrative, largely that of a good deal of half-solitary wandering, would have had a different face.





WAITING FOR FISH



HAULING A TRAP



## Chapter II

### NEWFOUNDLAND

THE Atlantic Labrador, Labrador North, begins at the Straits of Belle Isle. There are two ways to get there, one by Bay of Islands on the west side of Newfoundland, the other by St. John's on the east side, and either of these points of approach can be reached mainly by rail. A long canoe, however, such as I took in 1903, is an awkward piece of baggage on an extended railroad journey, and not caring to watch at day and night junctions to keep it from being left, I held to the sea route throughout. I left Boston on the Plant Line *Olivette*, the 20th of June. There was a change at Halifax to the Red Cross *Sylvia*, with a day or two of waiting, then a run of some fifty hours to St. John's, and the rest of the voyage to Cape Harrigan, nearly a thousand miles as one goes, falls with the Labrador mailboat.

I had it in mind to see the coast at least, and form an idea of what could be done at some future time in the way of a trip inland. This might be all that was practicable on a first random visit. But what I was really hoping for was to get into touch with the Indians of the Northeast, the primitive Náskapi of George River.

My old southern slope men had told of them, with a touch of the superiority those with white blood are apt to feel, as wild and unchanged. Then Low, in his last report, had mentioned them; according to him they lived about the large Indian

House Lake on the upper George, depended almost wholly upon the caribou, rarely visited the shore, and were more independent of outside resources than any other Indians of the peninsula. Some of them came to a grown-up age without ever seeing the shores. By Low's account the short, rapid rivers of the eastern slope were unnavigable, and the Indians came out to the Atlantic only in winter, a few of the young men hauling furs on long, narrow sleds and hastening back with the few articles that they cared to trade for.

Indian House Lake itself had long seemed to me the most promising objective for a summer trip of any region of the whole peninsula. It was unexplored, being indicated on the map only in conjectural dotted lines. It was large, fifty or sixty miles long and a good many wide, and aside from its distinction as a last retreat of the primitive hunter, it lay in the heart of the northeast range of the barren-ground caribou, and well within the borders of the elsewhere inaccessible subarctic barrens. Here the great zone of the Barren Grounds, the Reindeer North, extending from the Atlantic to Behring Straits, can be reached by the convenient Labrador mailboat, which sails fortnightly from St. John's, and the step from ship to shore places one on the very verge of the little-known plateau.

For a good many years previous to the winter of 1903 it had appeared to me likely that a foot trip could be made from the coast to the middle George, but there seemed no way to be sure of this without making a visit to the coast, and the fact that the Indians found the country too hard for summer travel gave my speculations a real basis of doubt. If, early in 1903, I had not fallen

in with Dr. Grenfell in Boston, it is possible that I should never have staked anything so precious as a summer vacation on the doubtful chance of getting at the Indians, still less on the finding worth while a mere visit to the coast without seeing them. But to my surprise and extreme interest Dr. Grenfell told me that he had seen Náskapi at Davis Inlet in summer, even treating some of them professionally ("veterinary surgery" he called it, not being able to talk with his patients), and he insisted, against my objections, that they had some habit of coming out in summer, though by what means he knew not. If I would go by the mailboat to Fanny's Harbor at Cape Harrigan, his friend, Tom Spracklin, would put me across to the Hudson Bay post in Davis Inlet. This was enough; as summer came on I got together enough of an outfit to avoid being helpless after leaving the steamer, and departed for St. John's in time to get the first mailboat of the season. The venture was only a reconnoissance; I had no safe plans beyond getting eyes on the coast.

Halifax — quiet, seafaring, much fortified Halifax — is a comfortable place to wait. The old red-coated British garrison is gone, much regretted, but its works remain. The modern change in warfare is here plain to the eye. The imposing but grass-grown citadel on the hill, enormously costly in its day, is out of the reckoning. At the present time the real defense lies with certain inconspicuous moundy places far down the harbor, with few or no guns in sight. So also with the defenses of Quebec and its obsolete citadel, which I have been told cost thirty millions sterling. Yet if, however, as an officer once related, it saved Canada to the flag, the account may have balanced. At

Halifax I bought an old relic of a greenheart salmon rod, but all the better for the many salmon it had fought, for three dollars.

While we were coming down on summer seas from Boston, the *Sylvia* from New York had been creeping on behind us in heavy weather. On the bridge, when she came in at last, was Leonidas Hubbard, Jr., with Mrs. Hubbard, George Elson, and Dillon Wallace, also on their way north. I had known they were coming, but they were surprised at seeing me. If Mrs. Hubbard, pale from the rough passage, had been told at that time what her career was yet to be on salt and fresh water she would doubtless have been very unresponsive. But once on *terra firma* she forgot the past, and we all wandered the town together while cargo matters were going on.

In time we were off, our two Oldtown canoes, twin craft, side by side on the deckhouse. They were eighteen feet by thirty-three inches by twelve inches deep. Hubbard's weighed eighty pounds, mine ninety-one. The unusual weight of mine gave me sore thoughts, going alone as I was; the boat had been ordered in Boston at about sixty-five pounds, and came from the factory too late to be changed.

In the two weeks before we reached Hamilton Inlet we talked plans to rags, discussing at times whether I should join the others on their Northwest River venture. With more time I should have done so. I feared that they would even have to winter on the ice-bound coast, as indeed they did. Their chances would naturally have been better if I had gone along, if only because a second canoe would have given room for more supplies. As to going with them for merely the first of their trip,



THE CAPE RACE COAST



A SMALL BERG





which was discussed, I should share only the heavy up-hill stage of the journey without seeing much that would be worth while, and perhaps have to come back alone over long portages with my heavy canoe. I should get most of the bad and little of the good. The lower part of the larger Labrador rivers is usually uninteresting, while the first heavy-loaded weeks of such trips with their frequent portages are apt to be of a back-breaking sort and only justified by what follows in the easier waters of the level plateau beyond. On the other hand, Hubbard was not quite willing to go on with me to the northern coast. This would be risking his season's opportunity on rather poor chances, uncertain as the practicability of getting into the interior from that side appeared then.

For more than a day from Halifax it was foggy, and by the time it cleared we were well into the great fishing waters under Newfoundland. Here it may be said, the North begins. The air loses its sea languor, the water looks clearer and colder; the craft are open fishing boats, the seabirds are plainly northern. The change of latitude, as we fared toward Cape Race, was plain. Whether it was the many boats with their two tanned sails that most appealed to us — boats of fishermen sawing endlessly with long arms, "jigging" for cod in the early dawn — or the larger strange birds that wheeled about or skimmed the smooth swell, it would be hard to say. Slanting low over the bow flew a large, uncanny bird, with no head or eyes distinguishable, merely a sharpened spindle in body,— black, or nearly black above, white below, from end to end. "Two wings on a mackerel," sang quick Dr. C., who was standing with us, and the simile was just. It may have been a Greater

Shearwater. Proper birds, such as ducks and gulls, have necks and heads, or at least eyes and a visible beak.

The cliffs along by Cape Race, the southeastern corner of Newfoundland, are not very imposing from a few miles away, though high enough when near. Deep water comes to their very foot. Before the present lighthouse was built the place was one of the dreaded spots of the sea, with a sad history of wrecks upon its uncompromising shores. The great ocean pathways are near. Such was the set of currents at certain junctures of wind and tide that in time of storm and darkness a passing ship was carried almost certainly into the grip of that iron-bound lee. No skill of the mariner availed; lead and line showed no shallowing, the log gave no reckoning of the drift. Without warning came the breakers and the fateful cliffs — by many a ghast lookout seen all too late.

In the placid dawn a few fragments of ice floated wide set over the silver. The level of the surface seemed lifted far above the seas we had left; the impression of high latitude was remarkable. We were, in fact, in Arctic water, the eddy and edge of the polar stream. The sun was still far below the horizon in the northeast, passing imperceptibly around; it was hard to believe that it would ever reach the sky line.

As we bore around the land there opened up, three or four miles away, our first unmistakable polar ice. It was only a bluish, irregular boulder of one or two thousand tons, touched by the east light, but one who grew up under the spell of Kane and Parry and Franklin sees with almost unbelieving eyes such a messenger from the real Arctic. We were come upon the actual polar

world. Where this worn berg first yielded to the stream the north star was high to the zenith. Men in skins, perhaps, had seen it slowly pass, the wheeling burgomaster, the walrus and white bear on the moving floes.

Further on, a fine cleft berg appeared close to eastward, and more bergs during the few miles to St. John's. The greater bergs stood near the narrow entrance to the harbor, a grand barricading fleet. This entrance is scarcely distinguishable from outside. When I asked Captain Farrel if he could go in at night or had to wait outside, he said with a turn of the thumb toward the tall bergs seaward, "We *have* to go in! Better than to bum around in that stuff!" So it might be, but it looked a hard choice.

St. John's is the portal of the north Atlantic, and lives by its prey from the sea. Countless cargoes of cod have come through its narrow gate since Jacques Cartier, in 1534, found the Basque ships established there. Countless have been the seals, and the stream of salmon and sea trout and the furs and skins of the North has never been stayed. Now the sealing is not done by schooners, but steam sealers. Small, strong, with sloping bows to bear down the ice, they lie idle from spring to spring, bunched in twos, threes, and fours along the east side of the harbor. The city is on the west side, stepping up on wide slopes. Its buildings are wooden, to an extent, and not old, being replacements after the great fires of recent times.

Now we were to learn something of the way of northern mailboats, the way of steamers in ice-bearing seas. The Labrador boat, it appeared, might be back from north in a week, or she might

not, depending on the ice,—not the weather, but the ice. At Tilt Cove, two days north, she would be reported by telegraph, we would be notified if we were near. We need not engage staterooms in advance, there would be room.

There was nothing for it but to go fishing. There seemed not very much else to do. On a holiday just then eight hundred people were said to have gone out by railroad for trout. By rail we went to Whitbourne, some way out, then down the Broad Cove branch ten miles as best we could; there was no train that day. Mrs. Hubbard drove with the luggage, the rest walked. We camped at Broad Cove, near the telegraph, among many shallow ponds. The country was burnt and desolate. Many kinds of gulls were about, with little obvious occupation but to exercise their remarkable breeding-time vocabulary. A cackling note prevailed; almost all were weird or discordant. They may be love notes, *but*—! Early one morning we were waked as one person by the broken squawks of some large affair that flew close over. Elson was sure it had a very bad pain. It may have been a gannet, if they commit such disturbances. These cries, over the desolate region, were disquieting to the ear, a little as of the underworld, and according too well with the rocky burnt waste.

The streams were low and sea trout had not come up. There were yellow-bellied trout in the ponds, sometimes with black parasitic spots, these apparently due to the low state of the ponds. We caught fish enough for our uses, mostly from quarter to half pounders, or less. They were what the St. John's trouters call mud trout, which curiously is their most complimentary term.

"They were real mud trout!" a fisherman would say in climax, when describing his catch. In truth they *were* the best, as far from a "muddy" tasting trout as possible. I suspect them of being a distinct variety, these yellow-bellied trout of the shallow, black-bottomed ponds, perhaps the Marston trout.

We had a good time of it. The Hubbards had a tent on one side of the railroad bank and the rest of us on the other. We scattered about the different ponds. Aside from the gulls there was nothing unusual in the way of wild life. Some geese bred in the region, Wallace saw an otter, and there were loons, also beaver—somewhere. In a few days a message came from the Reid Company, and the party divided, some for Harbor Grace, which was very near, the others to see the baggage aboard at St. John's.

We were off toward night July 2 or 3, with fog, but made Harbor Grace in two or three hours, where many passengers came on. In the cabin, with five staterooms and a small ladies' saloon, there were twenty-four persons, and we now had light on the steamer's information bureau. What we had heard was obviously true; there was no need of engaging staterooms, for no more than a berth apiece could possibly be beld in the pressure of such numbers, and we did get the berth. It would have been a hardy individual who would have attempted to play dog in the manger with a whole stateroom. There was, of course, a good deal of camping about in chance places, and small ventilation.

For days it was foggy and little above freezing, with a sea and growing wind from northeast. There was no place to be warm. On deck the

vicious air went to my bones, and below it was chilly too, with bad air. The Newfoundlanders took it well, standing unconcerned about the open deck by the hour while I was seeking the sheltered places and was never comfortable. It was a bit mortifying to find myself so distinctly inferior, though these people were younger and seemed an unusually burly lot. But after a day or two, happening to observe how one of my stateroom mates was dressed, I saw a light. Getting into my kit I put on all the clothes I had along, beginning with two good suits of winter underclothes and ending with the usual overcoat. Coming on deck, burly with the rest, I shivered no more.

Not many gulls appeared, but beds of shearwaters, locally "hagdowns," and other kinds, stretched along on both sides at times, and single birds skimmed the waves rapidly with their pointed wings. They are never seen on land here, though their season on the coast is the natural breeding time of all the other seabirds. It used to be thought here that they managed to lay their eggs on the water, as swallows have been thought to winter in the mud at home. Their breeding place is now known to be in the far Antarctic. They are sea travelers indeed.

Ice was visible at all times, save in close fog. The navigation in such weather involved much more than familiarity with the coast, and the working from port to port up the coast, in and out and away in the fog and moving ice and at times among islands and shoals, was an inspiring feat to see. The voyage requires a native seamanship beyond all taught navigation. Eighteen feet the steamer drew. There are not many men who could take a deep craft the thousand miles north

and back, with fifty stops each way, often in tight little harbors, and not take bottom somewhere along the way. Beyond the straits of Belle Isle the charts are of little use; beyond Hamilton Inlet there is practically no chart. Even if there were, the innumerable passages would be confusing in fog, and the moving ice islands of the open deeps are beyond all charting. The weather may be foggy a third of the time, as average runs go. Sometimes the tide currents foil the log; slowly the vessel creeps and the lead is plied. Perhaps the anchor goes down. Or a blast of the whistle may bring an echo from some known cliff, far or near, and the place of the ship located. Sometimes the short blast comes back instantly, R-r-rhatt! like an angry blow, from the face of a berg just beyond sight in the fog, and the screw reverses. In a dense, brilliant fog, lying low, the blue sky may appear overhead for hours. Nothing of that year's trip was better worth while to me than seeing Captain Parsons take his ship north and back again, good weather and bad. Trip after trip he does it, year after year.

The old *Virginia Lake* was a sealer, not comfortable and not very clean. She was lost in the spring sealing of 1908, crushed by the ice. Now the larger *Invermore*, with her luxury of cleanness and space, has taken her place, and one travels more comfortably now than from Boston to Halifax. The old boat was apt to be inhumanly crowded at times, with no reckoning of the impossible second cabin. Four persons in a very small stateroom was the rule, generally with the port closed.

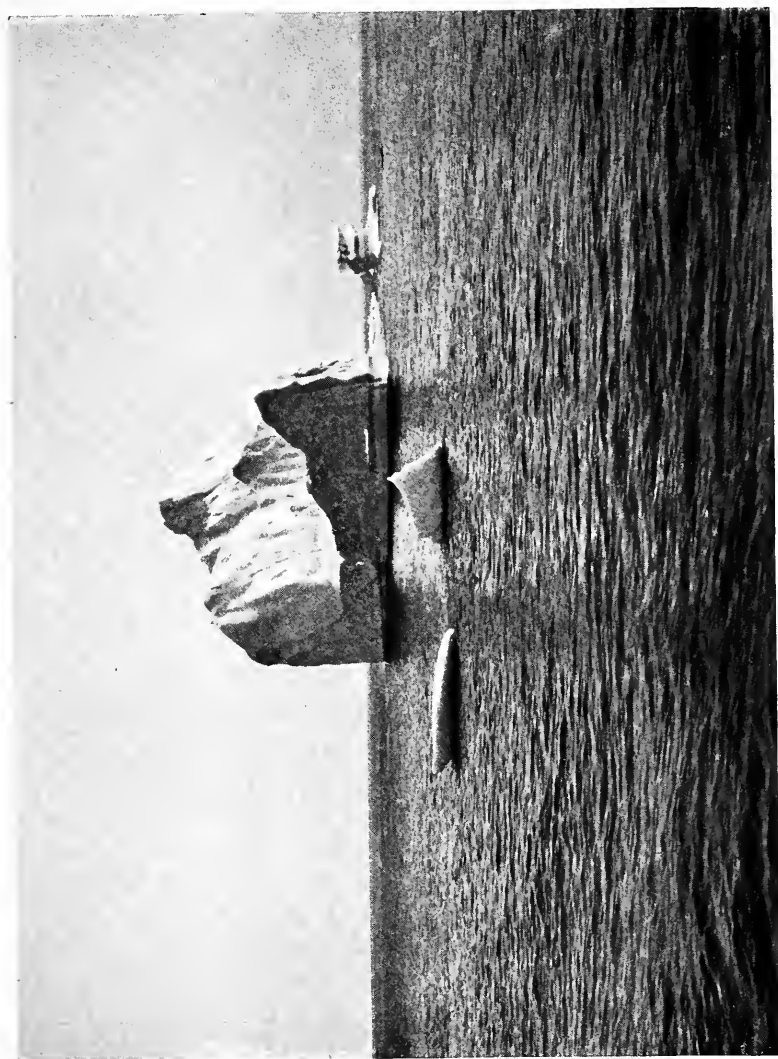
Tilt Cove was the last of our five or six stops on the island, then with thick weather and a strong sea the captain headed wide to the northeast for

many hours, past the straits, finally turning west to feel for the mainland. Toward night a long liner or cattleboat slipped across our bows, ghostly in the mist, and it was remarked that we were off the straits, for the stranger must be making for them. The passengers were largely skippers, going to their fishing stations. Although they were all familiar with the coast and could take a schooner almost anywhere upon it, none of them paid any attention to the log over the stern or noted the courses. It was not expected of them. I had been doing this very thing, thoughtlessly, going often to the log with my pocket compass, but I became conscious, from the reserve of the skippers, that it was a breach of etiquette; Parsons winced a little at first, but in such matters he was as easy a man as ever walked a bridge. In the end he offered me his charts, and I got a living idea of the way his game — surely a man's game — was played.

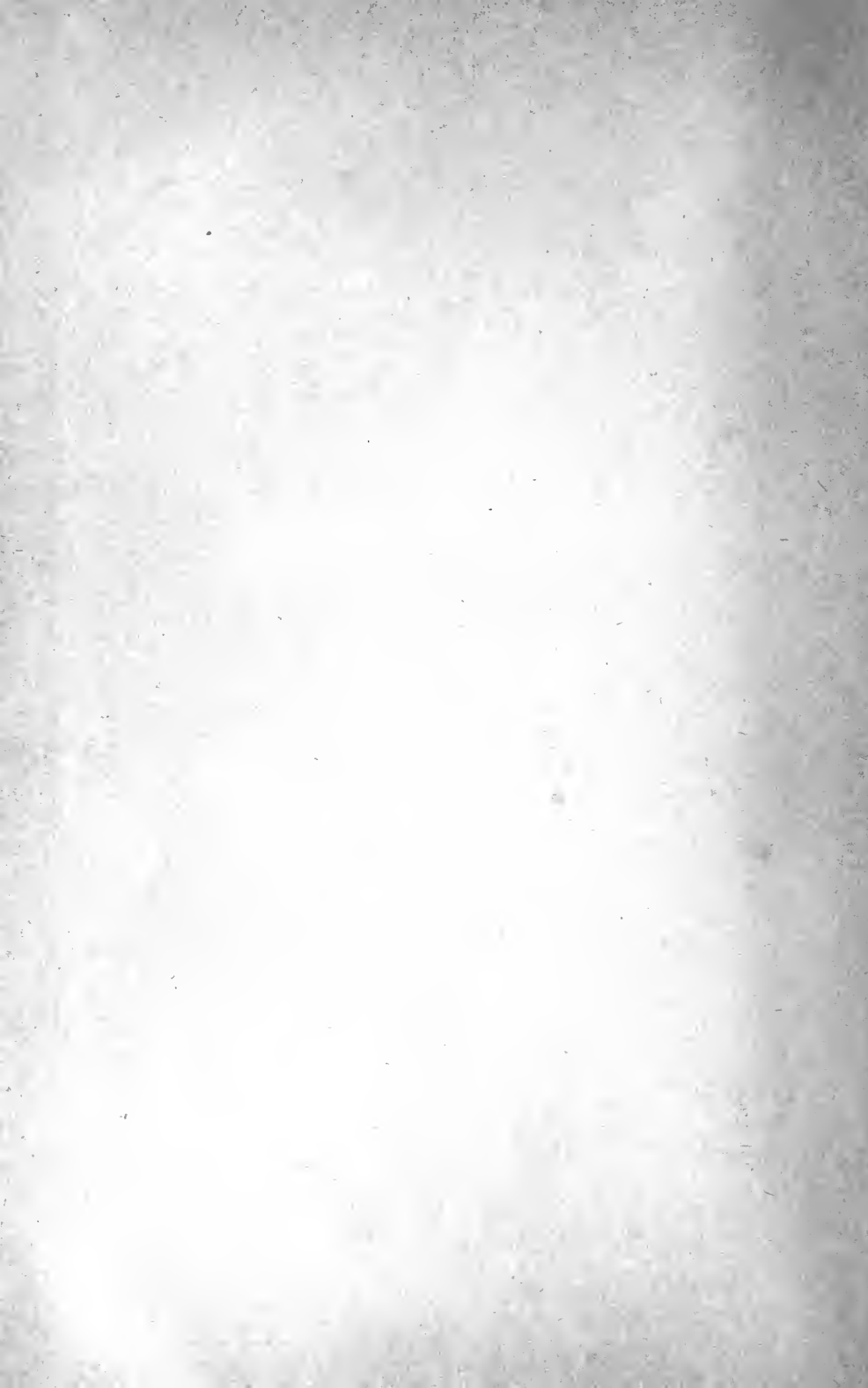
We overreached to the north a little, as was meant to be, and the guesses of the skippers when we came upon the high Labrador shore were mostly for Spear Harbor, a little north of Battle Harbor, and as I remember they were right, even in the fog. Battle was not far back.

Here Mrs. Hubbard left, to return south alone. The voyage in the small uneasy steamer had left her weak, and the desolation of the place, doubly forbidding in the gloomy northeaster, confirmed her depression at the parting with her husband. If this were the nearer Labrador, what would it be nearly a thousand miles farther north? Whether this was her thought it was almost an inevitable one; it is certain that at the parting she expected never to see her husband's face again. They had





OFF BATTLE HARBOR



been married only a year or two. In the months following she was hopeful, if not confident, but in the end the premonition of that evening at Battle was fulfilled.

### *Chapter III*

#### THE ATLANTIC COAST

**B**ATTLE was named for a fight between Indians and Eskimo there in early days. From there to Hamilton Inlet, some hundred and fifty miles, are dozens of fishing stations. Among them the mailboat follows the winding passages with little outlook to the open sea. Wonderful are the deep, shut-in harbors, such as Punchbowl and Square Harbor; not merely sheltered, but shut in by steep, rugged hills. There are no wharves anywhere; the ship's boat goes ashore, and shore boats come alongside, these chiefly to see the doctor. Few come when fish are plenty; there is no time for ailing then, but when there are no fish the doctoring takes long; it seems as if the steamer would never get away. Dr. Boyle turned none away, nor hurried; day and night he was rowed to shore cases whenever called, sometimes a distance of miles. Bad teeth were common; many with tied-up, swollen faces came aboard, sometimes to roar most lustily under the forceps.

Some of the crews of young men pulling about the harbors or coming in low with fish from the cod traps, were not only handsomely built and of great rowing power, but had a spring and reach which I had come never to expect in sea rowing. I believe that a crew could be found here which with proper shaping up would win all races. They might go through a good deal of rowing gear at first.

At that time the best of the employed people about the fishing, perhaps even the sharemen, found no fault if their season's work returned them \$100 all told. This was all, there was no winter work excepting odd jobs about, getting wood and the like, with a little netmaking or boatbuilding which ordinarily brought no cash. Some men went to the mainland mines, however, by the railroad. Latterly such resources, other than fishing, have increased, and with winter work a successful man may have an income of \$200. With comparative prosperity the old unfortunate credit system began to decline, and the efforts of Dr. Grenfell on the coasts about the straits have hastened the same economic end. During the period from 1903 to 1909 many small schooners were built by fishermen formerly on wages, the price of fish being high, and many did extremely well, as things go in the island. What the bad year of 1909 and the worse one of 1910 will lead to, in abandonment of fishing for work in the States and in Canada, is yet to be seen. There are very many of the former fishermen — virtually all Newfoundland men have been fishermen — in Boston, generally doing well.

From Battle Harbor to Port Manvers, more than five hundred miles, almost all the coast is masked by islands which extend out from five to twenty miles in something like an archipelago. The "runs" and passages are "drowned valleys," formerly with running streams in them, for the coast was once higher than now. Generally the passages are deep, the water line being well up on the slopes of the former hillsides. These slopes of the present shores can generally be trusted to continue on down some way without change, and

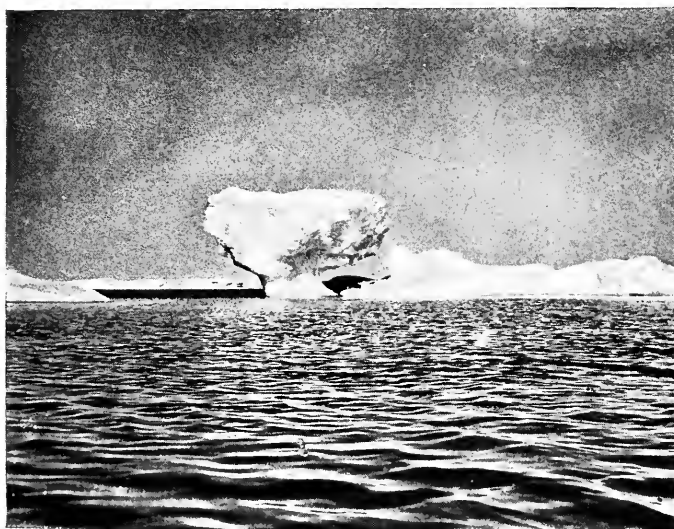
schooners bear on sail in unknown waters with a freedom astonishing to a stranger. Seventy or eighty feet of water is common in the harbors. Outside the islands the water may be shallower; the debris carried out by the former glaciers from the inland ice-cap has levelled up the outer valleys.

Coming from south the islands north of Battle look barren enough, but have, after all, a certain greenness, and even small trees and bushes in sheltered places. They are gardenlike in comparison with the gray rock hills farther north. Inland there is a good deal of forest. As we passed across some open bay a vista would open showing most invitingly the mountains and valleys of the inland country. Hubbard and I, much together, looked with lingering eyes upon the far sparsely forested hills. They were inviting hills to the feet, and save the fur hunters of the bays in winter no white man had traveled there. To our eyes it was the very unexplored land of our dreams. Again and again we said: "If we were only there! If we were only there, on those hills!"

At Indian Harbor we parted for the last time. The tragedy of the expedition is history now and needs no telling. A good deal of undue criticism has descended upon the means and doings of the party. They meant to ascend the large Northwest River, which discharges into Grand Lake at a distance of about two hundred miles from Indian Harbor, but missed it and took a smaller stream. They were traveling on the other side of the lake from Northwest River, the mouth of which is masked by an island, and as they had been told by local people that it was "up at the end of the lake," they kept on accordingly and went up the lesser river which flows in at the end.



WALLACE, HUBBARD, AND ELSON



UNDERCUT ICE, FANNY'S HARBOR, JULY 22





The mistake of itself by no means involved disaster to life; in truth the water dangers, at least of the large violent river they meant to ascend, would have been much the greater. They had a gill net, the most serviceable means of support in such a region, but it was somewhat worn and soon went to pieces. As to the outfit generally, I would willingly enter upon the same venture with what they had, but it would be necessary to have a good game year to get through to Ungava. The alternative would be retreat. The party happened upon a bad game year, and were overtaken by early cold weather in a district where native Indians have starved under similar circumstances. It is to be noted that winter is the only starvation time in Labrador. They might well have turned back a little earlier than they did, but the main cause of disaster was their being wind bound for nearly two weeks while the running water behind them was becoming too cold for trout, which had left the riffles by the time they were on the home road, and starvation followed. Their "Windbound Lake" was not large, and fate alone could have brought about so unfortunate a happening as their being held there such a length of time. Not in a hundred seasons, it may be thought, would the same thing happen again. In lesser sort a certain ill fortune followed the party almost throughout, whatever their skill and judgment, as when one has bad cards through an evening, though the mathematical chances may be a thousand to one against it. Small expeditions into uninhabited regions of this sort can only be entered upon on certain assumptions, chief of which are that no one is to be ill, no one is to have a serious accident, and on the whole

good luck is to attend — better luck than average. Bad luck, especially if recurring, is inadmissible. Suppose George Elson had turned his ankle fifty miles out from Grand Lake on the return, or his lumbago had laid him out for a week — the whole party would have perished, almost surely. Suppose Carey and Cole, whose boat was burned two hundred and fifty miles up the Hamilton, had disabled an ankle. Suppose they had had any approach to a run of bad luck after the boat was lost. On the other hand, suppose that the Hubbard party had happened to turn back a few hours before they did, before the wind came up — which might just as well have been — they would all have come out at Grand Lake laughing, though with an appetite for something besides trout. In the matter of criticism let him who has lived as long as Hubbard did on a desolate country, who has kept as high a spirit, cast the first stone! Most of us minor wanderers who have been many times out have to thank fortune rather than our wits that some unforgotten day or night was not our last.

At Indian Harbor is Dr. Grenfell's northernmost hospital, kept open only in summer. His work is appreciated by the fishermen, however his co-operative stores are viewed by the traders. He represents the modern humanities on a coast where before they were peculiarly lacking. The medical side on the coast now, what with the strong staff of Dr. Grenfell, the regular doctor of the mail-boat, and the year-round Moravians in the north, is fairly in hand.

At Indian Harbor and about the outer Hamilton Inlet generally is a striking display of black, eruptive rock which has forced its way up through

fissures in the whitish granite. The mainland has risen and settled in its long history, apparently with the going and coming of its ice-cap overload, not to reckon in its immense losses of rock material, these largely gained by the adjacent sea floor.

In places the raised sea beaches are as much as five hundred feet above tide, yet the bottoms of the present drowned valleys are well below water. The fissures which have opened along the coastal line of weakness are visible from Belle Isle to at least five hundred miles north. The older ones are filled level with black trap, planed even with the granite by glacial wear. For miles, in places, the black bands may be seen stretching across the naked rock hills. The larger ones are apt to be weathered a little below the bare country rock, and the universal fertility of weathered lavas is shown by the firm green moss which carpets the sunken strip, as does grass an old road. Where the fissure crosses a hill crest a square notch may appear on the sky line, cut down ten or twenty feet and twenty or forty feet wide.

The old trap seams were filled with the molten upflow at a time when the present level was blanketed by a great thickness of rock measures now ground away. The later movements, for everything is still in motion, are accompanied by the opening of "dry" seams, without the eruptive trap. So fresh and clean are the irregular walls of some of these newer fissures that one wonders if they have not moved a little over night. Occasionally the movement reopens an old trap seam, the black trap either sticking to one side or being wholly loose in blocks. Inland there is no sign of these fissures; there the country rock is solid.

The mailboat visits Rigolet, some hours up the Inlet, either going north or coming south. From the Hudson's Bay Company post there, the Mealy Mountains rise imposing in the southwest, looking fully two thousand feet high. The inland climate is warm in summer and there is a fair show of light spruce on the hills west. Among the trees, especially on high slopes, the caribou moss gives a distinct whitish appearance to the ground. The unattractive adjective "mealy" doubtless came from this appearance, but the fine ranges deserve a more sounding name. Their Indian name also means whitish. *Kénamou*, the name of the large river which drains the mountains from south, means "Long Lake."

From Hamilton Inlet north the shores are distinctly more desolate, but the water spaces among the islands are wider, and fine bays stretch away to the rivers of the mainland, where snow-streaked mountains appear somewhat back from the coast. Sometimes those mountains show fresh snow in midsummer, as in 1908, when the ranges north of Hamilton were dazzling white.

Beyond Hamilton the fishing stations are fewer; and with the rising hills of Mokkaik and Aillik comes the Moravian Mission field and its sparse Eskimo population. All along from the Straits the bay people who came aboard showed traces of Eskimo descent. Everywhere was a little of the blood, showing plainer to the north, as the days passed, until at the missions there appeared a good proportion of the unmixed race. Hopedale, a little north of Mokkaik, is one of the older stations, begun more than one hundred and forty years ago.

Almost immemorial now to this strong breed

of the shore is the devoted paternal hand which has saved them so long from extinction as a race. The work is less known and appreciated than it deserves. If missionaries anywhere are entitled to the crown of achievement in an obscure and desolate region it is these. Their families, as an example of peaceful living, dwell under the same roof at each of the stations, a test of the human relation which if only in the absence of outside diversions involves rare qualities. The household work is relieved by Eskimo servants, but the cooking not so. The way of Eskimo women is not the way of fastidious housewives, and save for some recourse to the white daughters of the bays the more intimate work of the household is done by the wives of the missionaries themselves.

Such peoples as the Eskimo are ever children in the presence of advanced races. They are to be led when they can be led, restrained by a firm hand when for their good; it is for the worse that the means to this end are rarely ample. The influences of summer traders and of fishermen, who are generally traders too, must bring vexation to the Moravian path. Their chief support comes from England, where is the head of the order. A store is kept at each mission, but the mission proper receives nothing from it. The uncommercial nature of even the trading part of the establishment is shown by the fact that the balance for the year is usually a loss, to be made up by contributions from abroad. A set price is paid for fish; if the market falls below it the mission loses, and vice-versa, but the people are saved uncertainty.

The season was rather an early one, but snow in streaks and broad patches showed frequently along the slopes through July. Pieces of shore ice

drifted aground with wind and tide, and about sea and shore were fragments of fresh-water ice from bergs. To our unwonted eyes the luminous turquoise and azure of the thinner forms and underwashed caves were of almost startling beauty. One must see to realize. Occasional massive bergs were grounded along the coast wherever the water was deep enough to let them in. Seven eighths of their mass is under water. They are apt to have long projections, underwater capes or tables that cannot be seen in windy weather, and the steamer keeps well clear. It is told that once a large steamer was caught amidships by a rising tongue of ice, as a berg turned partly over, and raised bodily out of water. By one of those touches of luck that ice navigators have to have she tilted forward, slid off, and was able to go along. Summer bergs are rather well avoided. A captain would lose his rating if he went near a summer berg unnecessarily and anything happened. Parsons is careful about them; it is fairly safe to say that he will never lose his rating, at least in that way.

The bergs are dazzling in the sunshine. In a photograph, when taken near, water and sky are apt to come out almost black by contrast. One can scarcely give them little enough time. As the summer goes on they become opaque, dead white, in dull days, but a stab of the oar brings up on hard blue ice at the very surface. As they waste or lose fragments they change level, perhaps turn over, and the smooth, wave-washed band and groove of their old water line appears slanting at one angle or another with the water. One side of the berg, revolved up from long submergence in the warming sea, may be rounded and smooth,

with many clear, blue veins; these are regelated fissures opened in its progress down the uneven Greenland valleys. Another face, lately rifted, may be of sharp crystalline fracture, texture such as only living crystals have. Indeed the bergs are gigantic crystalline masses, pure elemental separations, the like of which neither land nor sea has to show in any other form.

Although, when close by, the tall walls and pinnacles of ice running up one or two hundred feet are wonderfully imposing, the ice is most beautiful — and at times the tall ice comes near to being very beauty itself — when distance heightens the shadows and gives effect to its shape. Some bergs appear fragments of elemental structures, at least their squared blocks; in some lingers the greater design, foundation, plinth, and shaft, and, if indeed a little aslant, the iced cornice. Man's architecture in all its forms is hinted at, and often the forms of living creatures, natural or grotesque, but the spirit of the ice is mainly architectural: the gods of the North had their temples, and these are their fragments. The bergs are Nature's Greek phase.

Yet, ice and all, the question whether Labrador is not the safest rock coast in the world to navigate is worth mentioning. This is not merely from its innumerable shelter places and deep channels, ground out smooth by glaciers, but also in summer, from its usually moderate winds and smooth sea. A really heavy sea I have never observed north of Belle Isle, not such as one sees on home coasts. In this is compensation for having ice about, for bergs do a good deal toward breaking up the ocean swell. Although there may not be more than four or five bergs in sight at one time, from

the steamer run, the polar stream is from one to two hundred miles wide, and somewhere, beyond sight, there are more and larger ones. The tops of some of them look to be a half mile long,—majestic, slow-moving islands, showing just above the horizon. It is small ice that can come near the shore.

What the places, what the granite ways, where such great masses may be launched without breaking, may well be wondered. No matter how even are the slopes, the outer edge of the ice would naturally tend to float up, with tremendous force, as it became submerged. Upon all the glacial frontage of the long Greenland coast there must be few places where the greater ice islands can take the sea whole. Some one remarkable conjunction of slopes may yet appear where the thing can happen, the more reasonably that such bergs are not common. Yet, after all, the structural resistance of such bergs is not to be underrated. If floating two or three hundred feet above water its total height would be near two thousand feet, and its cross section nearly square. The great tables of the Antarctic, larger than any of the north, launch themselves successfully in great numbers. Such marvelous debouchements into deep water as prevail in Greenland occur nowhere else in the northern hemisphere. The great Alaskan glaciers discharge into shallow water on the submerged continental shelf. There is no tall ice on that coast.

With all the thousands of schooners that visit the coast, and many larger craft, life is seldom lost by drowning. For one thing, so favorable are the slopes that a craft is likely to drive actually ashore and permit one to get out. Some schooners



are wrecked, they are mostly soft wood affairs, but I am not sure that a summer wreck has brought a drowning since I have been on the coast.

Long periods of calm prevail, more especially in the north. The fishermen tell of glassy days at Mugford, and north, which run on until they lose time, becalmed, which they can ill afford. Of course the open sea is never quite flat, for unless in strong land winds there is always some heave.

When blows come on, as they do, it is not an uncommon thing for a crew to put out all the ground tackle available and get ashore, especially when the alternative is lying in a harbor with other schooners to windward. These, of course, may drag and smash their way through the fleet. This practice of abandonment has a doubtful look at first; certainly it is not sticking to one's ship. It must be a curious sight to see twenty or thirty schooners tossing to the wind, deserted, and the crews scattered among the shacks on shore hugging the fire. But they are right. When there is anything better to be done they do it, and they know.

They know the sea, and whatever can be done upon it they can do as few can. I have not sailed much with them, but something of the ordinary day's doings of the fishing schooners came to me during a little run, in 1907. I wanted to get from Hopedale to Davis Inlet, some fifty miles, and after a good deal of visiting about such craft as were in the harbor I got Captain Eliot, of Twillingate, to take me as far on my way as he might happen to go. His schooner was the *Cambria*. He would not bind himself further, for he was looking for fish, and his whole voyage, his year's fortunes, might turn on his seizing upon some

chance opportunity to locate in a good "berth." He could neither be bound to my course nor have my concerns on his mind. But he agreed not to put me off in a dangerous sea. Several other northbound captains had refused to take me at all; though well enough disposed, they could not be bothered; mind and craft must be wholly unbound.

Captain Eliot towed out of the harbor with a rowboat to a streak of light air outside and got me on some twenty miles that day, to Windy Tickle, through the region of islands and bays known as Malta. Once during the forenoon, while most of the men were below, "mugging up" on hard bread and tea, there came a hard thump. The men questioned its being a rock, and mentioned ice. No one went up, but it was remarked that she struck hard. Presently they did go up — for whatever purpose. Soon the skipper and another came down, without comment, and we beat along in the fresh breeze, the water land-sheltered and flat. When I suggested to Eliot that he must have sailed these waters many times, he replied, "No, not as far as this." Still he knew pretty well where to go. "When we have been a time or two over a route we know it well enough to sail it."

He was watching everywhere for fish. Here and there along the islands or in far bays were lying other schooners. Off he would go in the rising breeze, for a speck of a hull or a masthead showing over some low island, down overboard into the boat towing behind, and away for a talk and a visit. His purpose was to find out that the other skipper was getting fish, if he was; the latter's, as a rule, to conceal the fact if he could. No crew on fish wants neighbors. Boats coming in from the traps were scanned, boats jigging vainly to

find a "sign" of fish were noted. Nothing escaped observation. A boat low down with fish would be a certain find. But it was early in the season, fish were scarce, and all the schooners floated high. Eliot had not a fish aboard and was keen accordingly. "What's the use of talking with the skippers?" I asked, "they won't tell you the truth." "I can tell pretty well by the way they talk," he answered. Almost always, I think, he could tell; there were a good many indications to go by. So we went, often several miles about to one ahead, finding nothing worth stopping for. That night we lay in deep, precipitous Windy Tickle. Setting off as the tide began to fall in the morning we went fast upon rock bottom. The schooner being light the matter was probably no worse in any case than the loss of a tide, twelve hours, but Eliot, acting with great energy and steadiness, putting off a boat anchor and keeping his sails drawing full, got off in twenty minutes. I had thrown up my hands in his behalf, given up, and told him so; the tide was falling and it seemed useless to try long.

We went off the rock with wind and tide carrying us rapidly, the long rope to the boat anchor paying out fast overside, spinning up from the deck in jumping loops and coils that were dangerous to go near. In order to save the line and kedge a man sprang to the job of fastening a float to the end of the line before it ran out overboard. Remarkable to see was his clever fence with the snatching coils, risky to approach, and the time was short; but before it was too late he actually cuffed a hitch around the float without ever really laying hold of the line, and the trick was done. There had not been an excited word throughout,

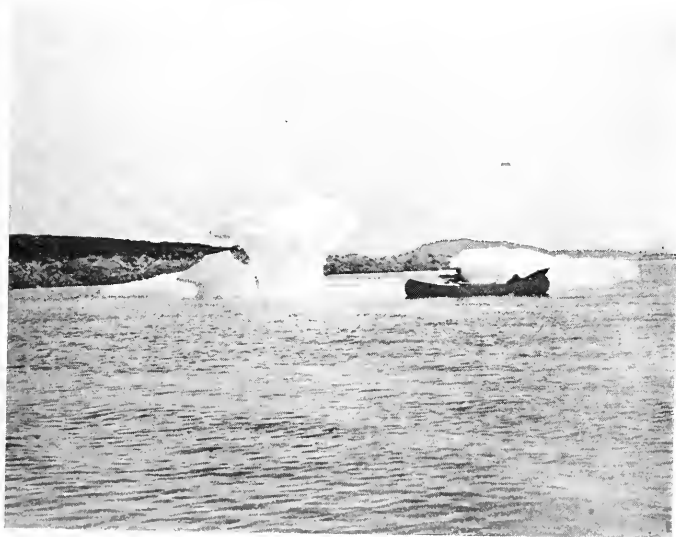
unless from me, much less swearing. When I talked, afterward, "We expect to be on bottom some," was all the skipper said, though he owned the boat.

After the kedge and line had been picked up we moved for the open reaches beyond the tickle, under full sail. But we were not done with old Windy yet. I had gone below and was talking with the cook in the large space forward when a low boom came from beneath, followed by another a little louder, with some jar, though the schooner kept on — we were rolling along on loose boulders that lay on the level rock bottom at the head of the tickle. I looked at the square of light above at the top of the ladder with an impulse to climb, then at the cook, who seemed steady enough; and the cook so taking it, I did not care to be the one to bolt. Several times we struck, the boom sounding rather impressive in the empty hold. After staying a decent time below I went up, presently remarking to Eliot as to our too easterly position. "There isn't hardly water enough for her at this tide," he observed, but slacked no sail. Then we ran into the open bay beyond.

Eliot had never been there before. When he asked once where to go I could say little, having been over that water only in small boats. "We have mostly to go by the slope of the shores, in places where we haven't been," he remarked, and in answer to a question, "Yes, we often have to go where we don't know the ground, when we are beating." But there was no indifference; going up the run there were always three pairs of eyes, side by side, scanning the water ahead. The intentness of the three lookouts never fal-



THE COOK OF THE CAMBRIA



OVERTURNING ICE, NEAR VOISEY'S BAY, 1905



tered, yet it seemed to me useless to look for any but very high shoals.

In a few miles we drew up on a schooner ahead. "There's a pilot for us," said Eliot. "Are you sure that she knows where she is going?" I asked. "He's a neighbor of mine and knows this ground," he answered. With shortened sail we followed on in the track of the other schooner. I should not have known that Eliot had been anxious, but I now saw his relief. Five miles from Davis Inlet the pilot schooner turned sharply, more than half round, and went off down a long passage toward the open sea. I happened to be just taking some tea and hard bread below, but before I got started on it Eliot put his head into the gangway and asked if I was willing to get off there. I certainly did not care to — the wind was strong and there was an annoying slop on; moreover, I wanted my tea and bite, my "mug-up," before going to work. But Eliot had already done a great deal for me, there was a question of sporting blood, and in a few minutes I was overside and bobbing about in my canoe, empty and rueful, but with honor saved, the schooner off down the passage like a bird to overhaul her pilot. My mug-up came two or three hours later, with some Eskimo I knew, who were camping on the "Red Point" below Davis Inlet Post. It had been a vicious wind and hard rowing, though happily the run was landlocked.

## Chapter IV

### FANNY'S HARBOR

EARLY the 8th of July, 1903, we ran from Hope-  
dale to Fanny's Harbor, and I scrambled  
up on Tom Spracklin's stage, to stay longer  
than I then imagined. Tom stared a little, but agreed  
to take me in—it was a matter of course. Afterward  
the people of the place said I looked a poor risk,  
for a person knocking about, and what with leav-  
ings from old malaria and the marks of a coldish  
voyage with evil ventilation, perhaps it was so.  
Cod had not come in, but Spracklin had a gill net  
out for sea trout, and we did well for food.

Fanny's is on the east side of Cape Harrigan  
Island, with a short, narrow entrance, which has,  
of course, a rock in the middle. "There is always  
a harbor rock," the fishermen say. The harbor  
is small and rocky, but the shore is low to the west,  
where are flat moss tundra and the shallow dead  
ponds common to all bog places in the North.  
Tom's literary imagination, which I was to appre-  
ciate later, led him to remark on there being "a  
million geese over there in the fall." There *are*  
a good many, dropping in from north on September  
days.

The island is three or four miles across. Out  
to sea are shoals and rocks, and here the pack  
ice makes its July stand against all craft. This  
was an early season and the pack just let us in,  
stringing off to sea for good by nightfall. In 1905  
it was strong the 22d of July, and the *Virginia*  
had to turn back south, after some hours of heavy



ramming; she had to go into dry dock afterward at St. John's, to touch up her screw. The western hills of the island, gray and desolate, are six or seven hundred feet high, and offer a good lookout. Soon settled, I took my rifle and paddled over to the level moss ground around which the hills circle. The head wind was almost too much for the single paddle, and my progress was made a subject of depressing comment after I got back.

The island is Arctic enough, and was to me a new utterly northern world, none the less so for the bergs always in the offing. Just out of steamer confinement, I walked with quick feet. What looked like grass, in the lower lands, was moss. Much of the footing was velvety and firm, even on the bogs, though in places they were like bogs everywhere. The early flowers were many, some with stems an inch long, some less; the best quite like our bluet in shape, but a marvelous pink in color, and growing in dense patches the size of one's hand. It is all but stemless. An Eskimo woman has called it, from description, the *Irok*, but there may have been a mistake of identity.

In damp places the white blossoms of the bake apple or cloudberry showed above the moss, and where it was drier those of the familiar serviceberry and of the northern blueberry, clinging flat to the ground. On the hills were scattered boulders, lichened on sheltered faces, and little plats and streaks of moss, though at a distance the hills appeared to be of absolutely lifeless gray rock. That there should be animal life in such sheer desolation seemed out of the question, still less that it should turn out a rabbit pasture, but near the top of the highest hill I came upon my first Arctic hare. They are invisible enough when not

moving, even on the bare rock. It was as if one of the smaller boulders had risen near my feet and hopped away, and its size was astonishing. It would not do to say that it looked as big as a sheep, whatever the fact, but it certainly was conspicuous. Captain Bartlett, of the *Roosevelt*, tells me of weighing them in the far North at sixteen or seventeen pounds. A good New England fox weighs only twelve pounds. The summer hare is mainly blue gray. In winter the tips of the ears remain black, but the rest is white, a wonderful long dense fur, white to the very skin. Our common white hare of the forests is brown below the tips of the hair, and the animal looks small and ill clad by comparison. The Arctic hare lives chiefly on the coast islands, where there is least danger of wolves and foxes. Its superiorities extend eminently to the table, but the beautiful skin, handsomer to my mind than that of the Arctic fox, is not durable, and brings only five or ten cents at the store.

At about ninety yards the hare stopped and I fired. He went off holding up his fore leg, and for a long time I followed on, finally to a rock pile, a natural refuge. I was sorry to leave him maimed and took a great deal of trouble trying to recover him. What puzzled me was that there was no trace anywhere of blood or hair. I gave up quite depressed, and it was months before I learned that this hare frequently runs on two legs, holding up its front paws. The shot was doubtless a miss, more probably as I had never fired that rifle before.

A large gray loon I shot floated out with the tide. There were horned larks blowing about the rocks, and a small, slaty bird with a striped

head. Between two small ponds a muskrat was carrying grass or roots up a little brook. There were some flocks of ducks out of reach, and many gulls. Next to the hare the most notable creature of the day was a great brown eider duck which fairly lifted me by thundering up from between my feet. It skimmed far over the tundra like a shearwater. There were six eggs, laid on a filmy mat of down; the nest was in a dry place several rods from water.

Although not getting the hare was a disappointment to me, one is not always sorry for shooting badly, and so it turned out on a ramble of the second morning. In a little cliff not far from the harbor lived some ravens. It was a convenient and prosperous location for them, for their home ledge was near the harbor and stage, and the leavings from the fishing kept them in plenty. The fishing being scarcely on as yet there appeared nothing of doubtful quality for them to eat, and as some one had told me that raven's meat was white and good, unlike crow, I thought it a good chance to try one. They were not shy, but the wind was coming in quick, pushing gusts, and my first shot was a miss. The bird took no notice, being occupied in balancing itself in the wind, with many flirts, but presently flew a few yards to a sheltered shelf. As I prepared to try again a second raven lit beside him, and I paused to observe their meeting. Ravens have a dignity absent in the crow, and the trait was manifest. For some time I watched them. Their fine unconsciousness of being observed, though I was near and in plain sight, was as that of high personages. I might not have existed, was not even accorded notice as an intruder. I began to feel uncomfortable. Their personable presence, their

affectionate courtesy toward each other, became too much for my purpose, and before long, thankful that my shot had missed, I took myself away.

That afternoon I went southwest a couple of miles, across the low ground, and over a pass which leads to the schooner anchorage in Windy Tickle. There was a little scrub spruce in the pass, and dwarf birch, the "deerbush" which caribou like so well in summer. It is an agreeable bush to the eye, with shiny, roundish leaves, neatly scalloped, and the size of a dime. The bush has the general habit of our home laurel and alder.

There had been quite a wind, and consequently no trouble from mosquitoes. Turning back the breeze lessened, moving with me at about my own speed. I had no gloves or other defense, and shortly mosquitoes began to be annoying. Before long they had grown to a thick swarm, raging like wasps. I had supposed I knew all about mosquitoes, from many years of trout fishing. On a still evening on the Bersimis we had, Indians and all, been wretched in spite of ten punk fires going. But now I became almost frightened. I had been tired, walking all day after the inaction of the voyage, and sorry to have to walk back across the yielding bog land, but that matter of regret soon vanished from my mind, and forthwith I took to a hard run, thrashing with a branch and only wishing that my other hand was not occupied with my gun. Winded, I would turn and walk slowly back into the breeze until good for another run. Eight hundred of the enemy, as I reckoned, followed into the canoe and kept the affair going while I crossed the half mile of harbor. One has to have both hands in paddling, unfortunately.

I had had my lesson,— was “blooded.” Never from that day — and for some years following I passed much of the summer in that country — have I gone away from shelter without special means of protection.

So with each new companion from south, there is the same assurance based on past experience, the same onset when mosquito conditions arrive, the same half panic, and the acquisition of a permanent memory. None ever forgets.

As to getting over the twenty miles to Davis Inlet, Spracklin would have been glad enough to take me, but was short handed. He thought some of the “Labradorians” ought to come along; however, if not, he would rig his jack, which only needed a bit of calking, and get me over. Meanwhile I talked to Bella Lane, over at Jim Spracklin’s place, across the harbor entrance; she lived in the next bay and knew the way of things. Some Náskapi were down in June, and would be in again soon. Ôpetik Bay was the place, fifty miles north. There seemed to be reason for thinking they had some large lake not far inland where they summered. The near lake, in the end, proved a myth, but Bella, who by the way had looks, was rather nearer right than most other coast people I have asked about Indians. The inland is none of theirs.

I was rather restless, but in a day or two Labradorians came, in the persons of Sam Bromfield and Sandy Geer, and would take me to the Inlet. Their price was high, but they were stiff. Long afterward Sam’s conscience stirred, and he told me that, in what was certainly a neighborly spirit, Spracklin had coached him up,— the American was “bound to get across.”

Yet at nearly the same time I must have qualified as a neighbor too, in some imperceptible way, for from that day on Spracklin's kindness to me was unfailing. I fell often upon his hospitalities and for years was as glad to see his face as any on the coast.

It was late in the day when we got off, towing the canoe in an uneasy slop. For a couple of miles we were outside the cape, heading for an island called the Devil's Thumb. The name is not so farfetched; the outline of a bent back thumb can be imagined, and for the rest the name of his Highness and one part or another of his anatomy is always in order where rocks and outdoor people are. The Thumb is unspeakably barren. It is the seaward member of the cape group. Traces of lichen scurf show on the landward side, but facing the north the high, steep hill is utterly naked, a monument to the inconceivable winter gales. In a more tolerable latitude the entire rock might yet be ground up for fertilizer, for it appears to the eye to be wholly of whitish or pink feldspar.

For a while we were under the sheer cliffs of the main island, and Sam watched the puffs nervously. Well that he was undersparred, as all open-boat people go when their shores are high, — and few shores are otherwise on the Labrador. His two stout masts, unstayed, were ready to be jerked from their sockets and laid down if the "lop" became too sharp. The relief to a boat in a seaway when this is done is remarkable. The local rig is simple. The after sail generally has a sprit and boom, the foresail a sprit only, and there is often a bit of a jib. Among the cod fishermen tanned sails prevail. I have wondered



AT RED POINT



DAVIS INLET





if there was an esthetic side to this, beyond the mere matter of wear. Certainly the eye does not demand the white of sails in the North — more white on a sea where shining ice and ghostly fog are one's lifelong enemies — not *near to*, at any rate. White sails may be harmonious, but when one is satiated with ice upon ice, and thick weather, and pickled air from the bergs and salt ice-pans of Baffin's Bay, one doesn't mind resting the eye upon a bit of warm brown here and there.

Sam's mind eased as we made the wider waters and lower shores beyond the Thumb. The long sculling oar took up the work as the wind failed and talk began. Sam *loquens* is Sam in his glory, altogether to my profit on that trip; it took some chilly hours to get to the Davis Inlet Post, and by the time we were there I knew a good deal about the region. The conversation was pleasantly personal in places, Sam waving gently at his long stern oar and I bunched in wraps beside him. His all-round gray whiskers gave him age enough to make me naturally deferential. As we progressed he looked down at me sympathetically. "I suppose you are about my age, about sixty?" A little aback I finally came in, "Well — er, — not *quite* that, yet." He acquiesced, perhaps doubtfully. It was rather hard, for I still had fifteen years to go. There was more tact in his question than appeared, so I learned later. Only fifty-five himself, he had placed his age higher to save my venerable feelings.

We passed Kutálik or Massacre Island close and were off the Mountaineers' Rock, a small affair awash at low tide. Sam told its tale. In old days when warfare between the Eskimo and Mountaineers of the inland was unrelenting the

Eskimo of the neighborhood were camped on the smooth moss ground of the western side of Kutalik, where their old rings of tent stones are still visible. While the men were off hunting Indians descended upon the women and children, killed them all, threw them into the sea, and departed. As the Eskimo men were returning one of them saw something floating and threw his spear, finding then that he had transfixed the boot and foot of his own wife, killed with the rest. It was late in the day, and the Mountaineers' Rock lay toward the sunset, some three miles away. The Eskimo noticed that the rock seemed higher than usual. As the tide came to its height they saw the Mountaineers leave the flooded rock and paddle up the bay beyond to the mainland. They had been concealed under their canoes, placed close together, and it was these which gave the rock its unusual elevation. The Eskimo followed them after dark, surrounded their camp, and speared them to a man.

Some say that Eskimo men as well as women were floating in the water that day. At all events the story shows how things went between the two races, from Maine, perhaps, around the northern shores to Alaska. They have little taste for each other to this day, although white influence at the shores has ended the fighting. There is no doubt that, man for man, with the primitive weapons, the Eskimo was at no disadvantage; but the Indians acquired guns first and gradually forced the shore dwellers out of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and to the north.

The Indians' families, back on the country, were probably not much exposed in the fighting, while those of the Eskimo were, as they could be

easily found along the shores. Yet it is not likely that the initiative has always been with the Indians. The two main causes of trouble among simple people in the world at least have been infringement of territory and woman stealing; and the Eskimo, while at a disadvantage from their shore habitat, have doubtless had some share in aggression and its proceeds. There are some Indian-looking individuals among the Eskimo. The case of Indian-Eskimo adoption, on the other side, is strong. Maine Indians show Eskimo peculiarities of skull. A Cree I traveled with in 1909 remembered that the old people on Hudson's Bay used to tell of adopting Eskimo women and children; and the practice, broadly, of adoption from among their captives, even of men, has been widespread among tribes of the temperate area. The well-known fact that at the height of their power the Iroquois tribes had as much foreign blood, chiefly Algonquian, as of their own, is in accord with the continental tendency.

To-day, nevertheless, it is rather hard to imagine a pure Indian of northeast Labrador marrying an Eskimo. Their antipathy seems racial. The Eskimo seems to regard the Indian as a hateful predatory creature of the wolf or panther kind. The Indian view is not so easy to assume; the Eskimo revolts him a little; his dirt, his lack of dignity, his diet, his smell. The Indian has given to him what to his own mind is almost as bad a name as he could, for the word Eskimo is Algonquian for Eater of the Raw. The Indian is particular in having his food cooked.

Late in the winter the Eskimo of the coast go inland for caribou nearly to the height of land,

but only in strong parties, so far as I can learn. Many of the white or partly white shore people tell of going into the interior one or two hundred miles, always in winter, but really they do not go far, and "signs of Indians" are mentioned with bated breadth. Some of the shore people are pretty well acquainted with the individual Indians now, for the latter are peaceable enough at the shore, but a shore person hunting alone at a distance inland would, I think, be made uncomfortable if discovered.

Sam was wholly interesting about the bay life, the hunting for deer and seals, the trapping for fur. The walrus is rare now; sometimes a straggler comes along from Chidley way, and sometimes still a white bear. Black bears are common game, though not too plenty; silver foxes, the dream of all Labrador hunters, are caught in some numbers, and Sam had had his share of them. There were otters and some few martens in the valleys near the coast.

Summer was given up to fishing. The mid-summer fishing was for sea trout and salmon, which lasted until the cod came in. All the people of the coast were hunters and fishermen, there was no attempt at planting this ground; they lived by rifle, net, and trap, only the cod coming by the hook.

Open boating is apt to be a cold, long-drawn matter in northern waters, and such was this voyage with Sam. The last of the trip to the Inlet rests much with the tide: if it is falling, strong wind is needed to get up; if rising, all goes well in any case. The post, with its flagpole and row of white buildings, shipshape as Hudson's Bay Company stations always are, is backed by quite a hillside

of small, dense spruce. The larger growth has been culled out in the course of years.

At the landing we were met pleasantly by Stuart Cotter, the master of the post. The arrival of the winter's mail, which we had brought along, was an event hardly second to any in the Hudson's Bay Company calendar. Cotter made little expression as we handed it to him, but in truth was a little dazed at finding his hands actually upon it. He was a young man, a bachelor withal, and had many friends in the outside world. As we stood on the wharf, the back of his neck became pretty well covered with large mosquitoes,—the post is a fierce place for them, what with fresh water, grass, and dogs. I told him about them as we passed up from the wharf, but the tension of the occasion, the coming of the mail and a strange visitor together, was too much; unconscious, he carried them all into the house.

## *Chapter V*

### INDIANS

**W**E talked until one in the morning, though I reminded Cotter more than once that he had not opened his mail. During the rest of the night I waked enough once or twice to notice a crack of light under my door coming from his room. Referring to it at breakfast it turned out he had been reading his mail all night and had not gone to bed at all! His predecessor at the post was not otherwise, he could not sleep the night after getting his annual mail. This for Cotter, a strong young fellow of thirty, who ought to sleep well under any circumstances, was rather notable; but, after all, winter is long anywhere north, and more than long in such a place of limited society.

We had sea trout of two or three pounds, tasting between winninish and brook trout, for breakfast, and barren ground caribou for dinner, killed in winter and kept in a snowdrift still visible across the run; the venison was particularly good. Alongside the cold-storage drift was a conspicuous vertical fissure up and down a cliff, accepted as a convenient noon mark, being exactly south from the post. The "run" lies east and west here, and is just a sea mile wide.

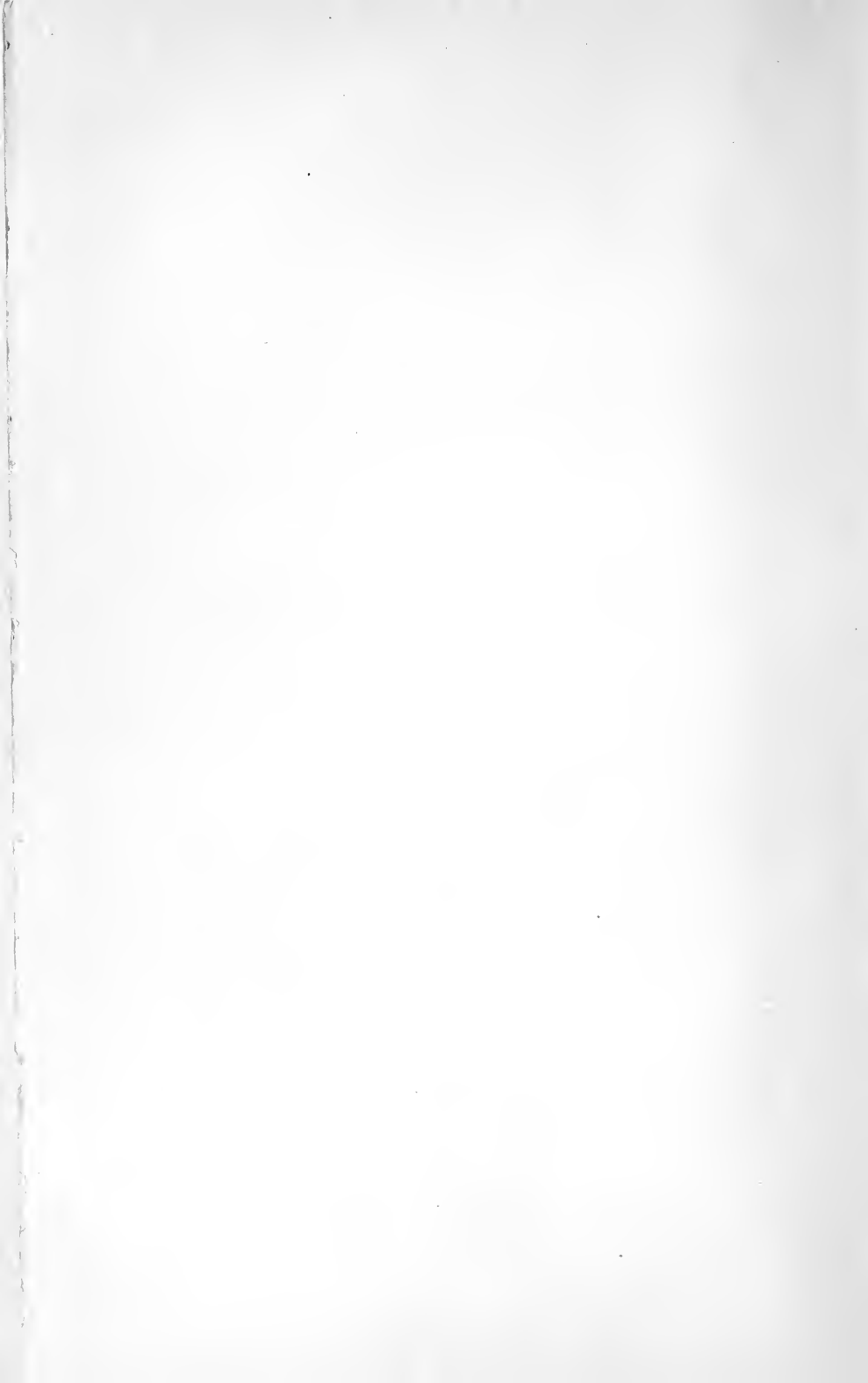
Now came real travel. I should have had a sad time that year without a canoe; there was not another on all the coast from Belle Isle to Chidley. It was hard to get into the interior as it was, for want of help. This seemed strange to me, for



DANIEL'S SUMMER HOUSE



DANIEL'S DOGS





there were enough people along, all hunters; but even now, after seven years' visits to the coast, there is only one person, and he a boy, whom I should think of taking inland. The worth-while men are busy fishing in summer, and at best have no taste for the heat and flies of the back country; still less, and this is a serious matter, for the evil presences of Eskimo theology. Under all, moreover, is the feeling that the Indians regard their presence in the country with disfavor.

There was a good deal of discussion as to what could be done, and in the end Cotter turned me over to John Oliver for safe conduct to Opetik Bay, where the Indians were likely to come out soon. They thought a man up there named George might go with me. In this they spoke rather faintly, but I felt hopeful enough; any human with legs could at least go along and be company; I should see a little of the country anyway, and need not risk missing the Indians by going farther than we could trace out their usual route. Oliver, my present boatman, was a half Eskimo, of a good sort, way-wise from having seen the world, possibly too much of it, with a party of natives who had been exhibited at the Buffalo World's Fair and in European capitals. Tips of real gold had not spoiled him as a seal hunter, and he was a good companion.

Travel goes much by tides in the calm summer days. We dropped west with a current along the run for a few miles before dark to the summer hut of an Eskimo named Daniel, for the Moravians have given their people Bible names along here. More lately, and better counseled, they are bringing in the native names again. We went ashore. Sleeping in an open boat is not so bad, but things

ashore promised better, and my confidence in the housekeeping of Mrs. Daniel — Mrs. Daniel Noah it was in full — was not misplaced. The little round-faced daughter was winning and pretty. A sealy flavor prevailed, not disagreeable in moderation. One's first-time approach to a really unmodified Eskimo in a warm day is apt to be a staggering experience. Small sea trout, split and gashed, were drying on a line; the larger ones were salted and sold to the post. Fish spawn, like slim strings of dried apples, was hanging about, and a bunch of small caribou horns decorated the gable.

The floor was the smooth rock, a good bed for us visitors. Cracks in the walls let in plenty of air, and for the first time since leaving St. John's I had air enough. Intentional ventilation is rare in the northern world, for mosquitoes would come in with air in summer, and cold in winter; the word ventilation is unknown.

Trout, of course, of shining memory, were the breakfast, with bread and tea. A number of beautiful young dogs met us outside, fairly leaping over each other at the sound of Daniel's voice. They quieted down, scattering about sleepily in the sun, and mosquitoes began to settle upon them. Relief came, however, in a pretty way. A handsome sparrow, the White-crowned, flew down, and hopping up to a dog whose head was conveniently low, cleared every mosquito, one by one, from his face. The dog did not move, though he might easily have snapped up the bird. The animal's face done with, the bird jumped upon its outstretched body and rambled over it, leaving no mosquito behind. The Eskimo call the bird Kútshituk, "fly eater."

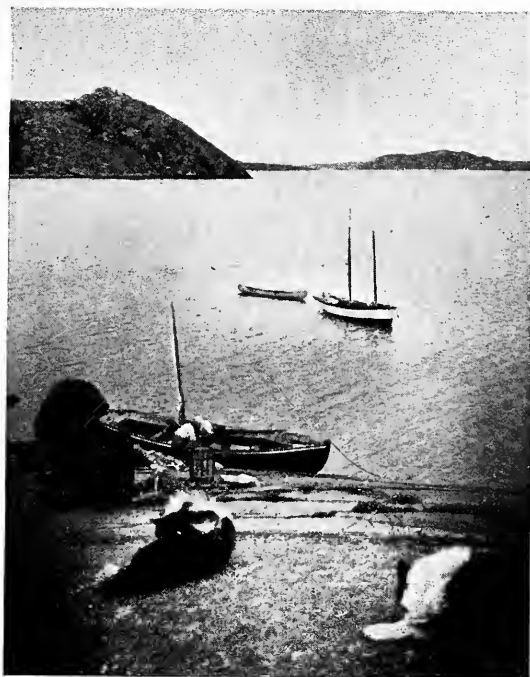
Daniel went along with us in his own boat to his winter house, some seven or eight miles, cracking away now and then at the loons with a worn-out .44 rifle, and shooting very badly. His house is a log house, on a passage spoken of as Daniel's Rattle, where rock cod are abundant in winter, and where, no less important to an Eskimo, all the winter travel of the coast passes the door. A rattle, by the way, is a passage where the current is so swift as to be noisy. We nooned at Jim Lane's place, Opetik Bay. He, like other people along, objected to taking pay for his hospitality, being only too glad to have company, but I prevailed in this; it would not do for me, who might not come along again, to leave them the worse in pocket for my passing. Among themselves the meals with each other may balance up in the long run.

While we were eating, Jim came in and asked if I wanted to see a white partridge. Turning out with the camera I found a willow ptarmigan walking about, unconcerned save with the management of a new-hatched family. She paid no attention to people or dogs. At a distance of thirty or forty feet I stopped with the camera. "You can go nearer," said Jim, "she won't mind you." Indeed she remained perfectly unconcerned, and my last snap was taken at six feet. Jim said she had been about the place for some time. Considering the natural nervousness of hen birds with chicks I thought the showing of fearlessness remarkable, and a light not only upon Jim's ways but those of his dogs. Jim looked his part, but he must have had a wonderful relation with those high-tailed Eskimo dogs. Such dogs snap up a cat or other small creature in short order ordi-

narily, and by reputation are a savage lot; but after this episode and that of the Kutshituk I began to have views of my own.

Wind carried us against tide five or six miles to George's, where the family were salting away trout at the rate of a barrel a day, fetching four dollars. The very small house was placed upon an island rock, to be away from mosquitoes, if somewhat vainly. Skins of loons indicated the prevailing kind of waterfowl; Opetik is one of their favorite places. On this coast everything birdlike is eaten, loons, gulls, owls, and guillemots. We had had eiders' eggs at Lane's; at this place there were sea pigeons' eggs, better yet. The pigeon, merely a little black diver, produces not only a large superior egg, but so much meat and such good meat that its being about everywhere is surprising. Its neat webbed feet, done in red, and used as a tail in flying, together with the white patches on its wing coverts, lend it quite a distinction when in the air. It nests in holes among the rocks, high above water, and turns white in winter.

George doubted taking on much of a job, but would go along to William's, up the bay, and we would talk it over. We were there, at the head of the bay, before night, at the foot of picturesque bare hills and mountains rising toward the interior. William (Edmunds), a virile part Eskimo whom I have always liked and respected, could speak pretty good English, and that evening we talked over all things. He was getting trout and some salmon, but said his place was not as good for fish as that of his brother David in Shung-ho Bay, which we had traversed without crossing over to the house. David caught in good years eighty or a hundred barrels of trout, and in marks-



FROM DANIEL'S HOUSE



LOOKING ACROSS DAVIS INLET



manship, hunting skill, and personal strength was fairly king of the region. He and Lane were peers in a way, and old hunting companions. David had been known to put his sled after a running herd of caribou and kill seven with seven cartridges while dogs and deer were doing their best. Wonderful shots are some of these part-Eskimo bay men, who use the rifle on seals' heads and waterfowl from their uneasy boats.

We canvassed the matter of going inland. William ought to have known the Indian route well, but whether he gave George the benefit of his knowledge is doubtful. The Indians generally came out at William's place and left their canoes, taking his sailboat the rest of the way to the post. He or his son would do the navigating, and by virtue of sails, oars, and their familiar knowledge of tide currents, the Indians paddling in numbers when necessary, night or day, they commonly made fast time. Sometimes they made a stop at Lane's. His sister, Mrs. Tom Geer, who lives there now, tells how well the Indian women cook, on the rare occasions when they come to the coast.

George finally agreed to go as far as I cared to; and off we went in the morning. "I'm in a canoe! I'm in a canoe!" he sang, between funk and exhilaration, as we moved away from the group at the landing; it was in truth his first canoe ride. The tide took us two or three miles up to a little stream called by the Indians *Mushauau Shebo*, Barren Ground River, and we had a good start by luncheon time, when our leisurely meal was graced by an excellent piece of bear meat William had given us to start on. George was one of the few white men of the region, trimly built, of a sailor's handiness, and withal talked well about

the concerns of the coast and the various families of the bays. He had traces of descent, as if there had been better stock somewhere back. The stock and speech of the region are mostly Devonshire. Some of the firstcomers, who married Eskimo women and took up the best bays, may have been men who were turning their backs on a past. "Most of our people had to leave England," remarked George easily.

Here the lower ground had trees, chiefly spruce, and the portages between some small lakes were tangled and without a visible trail. The going seemed bad to me after the regular Indian paths of the southern-slope rivers I was used to. Caribou paths were everywhere. The last of the migration had passed north about a week before in their usual way, first the does and young over the hills, afterward the old stags through the valleys. In all my time in the country since then I have never observed such beaten paths. Sometimes they led our way and we followed them, always to have them split up before long and disappear. We camped at the head of the last lake, on a good beach, where Indians had had fire before us.

From there there was no boatable water for some miles, all was rough land work; the valley was hot and mosquitoes active. The canoe weighed ninety-one or two, and with the paddles and a few odds and ends stuffed in carried at not less than a hundred. The other luggage was not light; we had to double portage the way, and took even three loads each over the rougher places. Until the third day, for fear of effects on George's enthusiasm, I did not dare to let him carry the canoe; after that, as he had done pretty well, and as I thought he would see by that night



that it would be easier to reach water ahead than behind, I gave him his chance at it. When night came the place where we happened to camp was the farthest point he had ever been to in that direction. It was evident that not more than three or four miles ahead there must be a stream, but as to the Indian route we had become uncertain. Talking at William's, George had professed to know just where the Indians went, but now he owned that he didn't know, and I was decidedly sharp with him. There were a few signs of Indians along, but nothing to show regular travel.

The night went well, at least for me. Before breakfast I had explored ahead for a mile, found good travel, and returned very cheerful. George was wholly unresponsive and pretty soon began to talk; his voice quavered. He had "laid awake until the birds were singing," thinking about things ahead. His boots were thin; his shoulders and neck were cut by the canoe; his family might be in trouble; the fishing needed him; it was hot, and the flies were bad. Finally, and there were tears in his voice, "You will go over to the river! and then up to the big lake! and then there is no telling where you *will* go!" Here his voice reached too high a pitch and broke. It was certainly a bad funk. After I told him he could go back if he wanted to his voice gradually recovered, and he said something about taking my rifle for his pay! The final touch appeared when he remarked that he had only agreed to go for a day or two. This was just too much, and walking up to him with two fists I induced him to take it back. He was a poor thing, and probably did more work for me those three days than in any three days, or six, before or since. His neighbors told me afterward

that his idea in starting out with me was to come into ownership of the rifle after the trip had failed, a good rifle being something like a fortune there.

He departed, and I felt truly better, though being left alone in such a place is an awkward thing. There seemed nothing for it but to keep along to boatable water. At least I had everything I wanted, and plenty of time.

Making up a pack about equal to the weight of the canoe, and abandoning the rest of the outfit, I took the load ahead a few hundred yards; then going back to the canoe I carried it on past the pack for a distance and so on in alternation. Thus the pack and canoe were never very far apart and not difficult to find. When carrying, one's eyes are so shut in under the canoe or so held to the front by a head strap that one does not see much by the way, and if the rear pack is very far back its location may easily be lost in bad ground.

It was something of a hard day, with the heat and mosquitoes and a few loose sand banks to climb; but like Crusoe in *his* lone scrape I had also my blessings — peace and a good appetite, and now and then a rest, with a bit to eat and a pipe. Occasionally through the day I stopped and gave a long whoop, for the benefit of the Indians, if any were passing in the valley.

About four, I came out unexpectedly on a high escarpment over a little winding river, two hundred feet below; a goodlier sight never cheered a tired portager. The way the canoe slid down that high sand bank on its own bottom was not slow. The stream is known to the shore people as Side Brook, but at that time I supposed it to be what is known as Frank's Brook, the river of the Indians. That night I slept under the canoe

near an Indian marked tree. It rained gently and the mosquitoes for a good way around came under too, although they did not get inside my good net. The canoe made a sounding-board and their screeching roar in the pent-up place was almost unendurable. At such times it is hard to shake off the fear of their finally getting at one. Their vindictive yells are beyond all wolves. "*We are going to get you!*" is their burden. I woke many times with nightmarish starts, and made a poor night of it.

Cutting a pole in the morning I made seven or eight miles upstream, caught some trout at a falls and lunched. So far the river had a firm velvet bottom, with some three feet of water—wonderful poling. The valley was now close, with thick alders, and I was able to find out whether the Indians traveled there. Examination of the tangled banks showed that they had not, and I was in a quandary, but finally looked about for a high observation point. A mountain at hand looked desperately bushy, and was steep, but on getting to it I struck a perfectly easy deer path leading all the way up. The outlook, my first wide view of the inland, was memorable. Coming from west was a broad, fine river that evidently the Indians must follow, with bold hills to the south and the escarpment of a high plateau dropping into it from the north. Not far southwest, upon the stream I had come up, was a beautiful round lake two or three miles across, set deep in the hills; not far below this lake the river turned about north and slid smoothly but white down a slightly sloping rock face some fifty feet high. The extreme western horizon was notched by a rock-walled lake of the larger river, where the cliffs had impressive-

ness even at the thirty miles distance, and there were high ridges far beyond. This was all the interior country I saw that year, still it extended more than half way from the coast to the height of land.

The lake at the head of the small river was so tempting that I thought of nothing but getting up to it and setting out my little gill net to see what was in it, and going back down the mountain I portaged the half mile of alder banks to the head of the rapids. In the course of the nasty double trip I lost my axe, and not caring to spend much time looking it up, I left the place without it. At any rate I was well over the worst ground on the way to the lake, and sat awhile resting and watching some good trout slapping about in the smooth water at the head of the rapid. It is a little curious, by the way, that in these streams of size the trout seem to prefer the smooth water above the falls to the pools below. That evening they were good to see, clearing the water here and there with assuring frequency. But as I meditated upon my situation it came to me that I was in a fair way to miss the Indians altogether if I went on. The lay of the country was such that while they could approach the coast from almost any direction, and would be hard to find at best, this particular stream led from a pocket in the hills which was quite out of their course. There was some chance of my meeting them somewhere nearer Opetik, but the sure way was to go back to Davis Inlet and wait. This conclusion was not to be avoided. Rather ill-naturedly I retraced the hard little portage, dropped down river until ten o'clock, when the sun was well down, and made a sky camp, i.e., boiled a kettle, and lay down on the mossy ground alongside the fire. The night was



THE NOAHS SPLITTING FISH, TUHPUNGIUK IN BACKGROUND



UN'SEKAT



clear, there was a white frost, and the mosquitoes slept through as well as I. It was a night for a king!

There was no real darkness on clear nights; one could always see the place of the sun at midnight. Always, when it was clear, the northern lights were visible, moving and pausing, and in many weird forms. This is their latitude; in the far North they are rare. To one alone in the wilderness they are strangely affecting.

To the Indians of the inland they are spirits of the departed; their people who have gone before are dancing in the sky. Some have heard the rustling of their wild figures, perhaps in truth.

Once again they rush and gather,  
Hands around they swing together,  
Robes are trailing in the skyland.

The people's belief is not strange. If any manifestation of the inanimate has the aspect of the spiritual, it is this presence of the northern nights. Fine weather persisted, to my great advantage when I reached the larger waters. There was not much land life; the trip had been nearly birdless, but now along the stream there were some few species. A white-winged crossbill and Canada jays of the darker sort were plain to identify. A lesser sheldrake appeared sitting on a rock, and there were birds of the finch or siskin kind about the spruce tops. All the portages seemed bad; a half-mile one just below where I first came to the stream I remember as annoyingly rough and tangled. I suspect that now, used to the country, they would seem pretty good; still I was doing with hundred-pound loads, which are something to a person lately from town, and more than have often fallen to me since.

The matter of bad footing becomes important when one is alone, for an injury from a fall is perhaps the accident most to be dreaded. Water dangers are hardly as inevitable, at least good judgment, which, moreover, is not called for continuously, meets most water situations well. But any footstep in bad deceptive ground may cause a disabling fall to a heavily loaded person. In the case of two men together the water danger is the greater of the two. Accident and illness are not pleasant subjects for the lone traveler to think of. Enough things have happened. There was old Jock Knight, a trapper on the Magalloway, in Maine, who "laid out" in a hut on what is now "Jock's Pond," forty days with erysipelas. "I didn't mind dying so much, but I didn't want to be eaten afterwards by the wild animals! I had fit 'em, fit 'em all my life and didn't want them to eat me." He was drowned, finally, when alone. There are tales enough of the sort. The pack is perhaps the most prevailing enemy of the lone traveler, who in winter almost always walks on the ice, and a man through the ice with a pack on is badly off. Once, though this is another story, while dragging a deer alone on the ice of a Maine stream, and looking long at the high top of Katahdin, I walked into a perfectly plain open hole. Luckily the water was only four feet deep.

Yet, on the other hand, few realize how different is the method of the man who is out alone from that of the same man when he is in company. Alone, he is deliberate, careful, circumspect; in company comparatively hasty and heedless, his senses apt to be clouded by conversation. The number of persons, chiefly professional hunters, who are habitually much alone in the wilderness,



is very large, yet I believe their serious accidents are very few in proportion, perhaps not one in ten; surely far fewer than among men who do the same things with companions. Still the old rule of the Narragansetts, mentioned by Roger Williams, "Do not travel far alone or without a weapon," is a good one, as all Indian rules are.

Indian lodge poles and winter scaffolds at the head of the rapid mentioned indicated snow six or seven feet deep. The scaffolds were placed on the tops of small trees cut off and projected enough so that a wolverene could not climb over the edge. Below the rapid the stream was very twisty for seven or eight miles and the gravel bars yielded to sand. It was early in the season; a little later I could not have passed without having to wade down the shallows.

Unexpectedly I emerged from between high-cut sand banks and floated out upon the wide main river, deep and clear and the bluest water I ever looked into. After actually scraping on a sand bottom so long it seemed like going off into the air. This fine river was very wide, in truth this part was its tidal estuary, although the current moved well and the water was perfectly fresh. After being so long shut in I felt a sort of shyness at being run out into the open, at finding myself all at once well out on the wide, full-volumed river. Lower, near a rocky point, I shot a large loon with the rifle and at last had meat.

From Side Brook it was only three or four miles to the mouth of the river. A bar extended a mile or two into a great bay, with endless boulders and endless gulls upon them — blackbacks and herring gulls. They made great uproar as I turned seaward on the half tide. The open sea

was all of twenty miles away. Far away, just inside the coast line, the water horizon at the entrance of the bay was broken by a pointed conical island, at that distance nearly hull down. It was a marvelously calm, dreamy day, yet cool, such as only that coast knows. There were ducks in every bight, white-wing coots and sheldrakes; sea pigeons skurried about, and the only sound over the broad inlet, after the gulls had ceased their cries, was the recurring hum and splatter of wings. Near ten miles down was the Kúdlituk, a landmark perhaps one thousand feet high; its northeast corner is square and rises perpendicularly from the talus to a great height. It is one of the least mistakable landmarks of the region. A hundred white-backed eiders were sitting along its base on large boulders. As I came on they would jump off like bullfrogs, bound up again from the water and off on the wing. It was a funny, unbirdlike performance. Not one, I think, flew directly from his rock.

As Opetik is chosen of the loons, so is this greater and even finer bay the place of that prince of his line, the eider. Around the rock points comes their grand rush, twenty or forty abreast, heads slightly tilted down and their white backs gleaming in the sun. They keep to the rock shores, leaving the beaches of the upper bay to the commoner ducks and the geese of early fall. Later the eider seeks the far outer islands. Mainly his life is seaward; his northern title, "Seaduck," bears he well.

Before reaching the Kudlituk I had unknowingly passed John Voisey's house, a small affair. It was weathered well to invisibility, and moreover to have seen it I had to look backward and

into the sun. He saw the canoe, but thought I must be an Indian and kept snug. He found out later that he had missed a white visitor, and the next year when I came along, not to take any chances of losing a caller, his little seaward gable had been painted red. No one on that coast means to lose any of the passing.

Somewhere past Kudlituk the sun went down, the sky became dull, and a darkish night came on. By ten, with sea breeze and tide opposing, it was tired, weary work getting on with a single paddle. The tides about Kudlituk are apt to worry a stranger; as nearly as I can understand them they chase themselves around and around the island, regardless of rules. It was eight when I left the rock, eleven when I landed on some smooth moss ground four miles away. For an hour or two I strained my eyes to the intersection of a far point to port with a rock sky line farther away, to make out whether I was gaining at all. It took a long time, in the tidal bobble and breeze, to see any change at all. One is apt to work too long with only three or four hours of night. But supper and pipe and bed were good that night. The mosquitoes were not; the salt water ones seem more desperately vicious than those of the high ground, though a trifle smaller. Protected by the smoke, I lay by the fire in great content for some time before turning in, and boiled the loon.

With the morning of the 21st another calm, wonderful day came on. In a couple of easy miles I cleared the bay and could turn southward. The way had been simple until now, but although I knew that some twenty miles south were waters I had seen before, the way was by no means plain.

To the east, beyond a few islands, a water horizon with bergs showed there was only sea beyond. Southeastward indefinite passages led also to sea; obviously they were a last resort. Southward, where I wanted to go, a high, firm rock sky line, ten or twelve miles away, was continuous, with no hint of a passage. While the weather lasted I could of course try the bays one by one for a way through, but my rate of speed was slow at best, and there might be all sorts of tide currents, which indeed there were. It was most on my mind that the weather could not safely be counted on, it was too fine to last. To be trapped in some deep bay for a week or two, unable to get out against the wind, would be rather stiff; worse still to be driven up on some small island; they looked waterless as the moon. A very moderate head wind would stop me, for a single paddle to a heavy canoe is futility itself against wind and sea. The water question need not have concerned me, for, as I came to know, there is sure to be a little anywhere.

A good deal of physical wear goes with the first onset into such a trip. It usually happens that three stiffish days of lake-and-portage work are about as much as the person of ordinary town habits can do and not feel stale; the fourth day there is a falling off. Now the morning I passed out of Voisey's Bay I had taken more wear out of myself for some days than the short mosquito-devilled nights could possibly make good. In fact he would be a good traveler who could keep up that sort of thing from fourteen to eighteen hours a day on any terms, even without hurrying. But for me the temptation of those endless perfect days had been hard to resist, and I had done too

much. It was the fourth day since I had seen a face; people began to seem a myth. How would Eskimo behave if I came to any? All was singularly beautiful, inspiring, but strange as another planet.

The first island east was pretty high, so I held over to it and walked to the top for a look at the channels. Curiously, while I was walking I turned to speak to some one who was close over my left shoulder. Of course no one was there. The incident was repeated two or three times, without the least variation of the impression. Once on the water again my friend left me.

Starving people who are walking continuously are apt to talk to imaginary persons, and some who get lost in the woods, even for a short time, find it hard to separate the real things from others. Before leaving home I had been seeing many people constantly, and the habit told. Now, the fourth day alone, I began to wish almost any sort of person would turn up. My peculiar experience on the island never recurred, and during a good deal of solitary travel in succeeding years I was steadier, if anything, than when in company.

Turning down the broad water which closes in near the site of the former mission station of Zoar, I was not long without more substantial society. Four or five grampuses were circling about two or three miles down; in the stillness I could soon hear the loud sigh they make on coming to the surface. Their backs are tremendously arched, almost like the rim of a large wheel. Not much of their length shows at a time, but more keeps coming as the first part disappears, until the effect of a revolving wheel is complete.

I watched constantly for some tide movement,

a difficult thing to detect in such wide waters. As the tide was falling a set toward a bay would point to a passage through beyond; an outward flow might be indecisive. There seemed a faint showing in favor of keeping south, and I held that way.

Before long one of the grampuses showed his back a hundred yards ahead, with a course which promised to take him quite near, and hoping for a shot I knelt with the rifle and waited. I wanted to see what kind of a beast a grampus was. Presently a hollow as of the palm of one's hand, but five or six feet across, appeared moving swiftly along, with the tip of a fin cutting along in the middle. The beast was in a good way to come up for a broadside shot at fifteen feet as it passed, and I made ready. But things did not go as they promised. At thirty feet ahead the fin swerved and came straight for the canoe. Desperately I dropped the rifle, rather uselessly seized the paddle and made a side drive. Grampuses are given to breaching, and although they are perfectly amiable, I was afraid that once under the canoe the beast would get excited and send everything into the air. It was a mile to shore and the water was ice water. Nothing happened; he must have gone silently down, but I was glad to be alone again. For the moment I had rather a sensation. They are big enough to do anything, often thirty feet long and stoutly built; it is not a bad thing to knock on the canoe when they are nearer than one likes. The bay people do not care for actual contact with them, though their boats are fairly large.

Still another turn in affairs was coming. Soon, while moving absently along, I seemed to catch the sound of a far voice, away in the west. Turning



SUMMER PTARMIGAN



WINTER PTARMIGAN





that way for a time it came again; I must say it had an attractive sound, and keeping on a little I saw a black speck moving on a beach. This grew to be a black dog; then some trout puncheons came into view, a human token, and as I landed an old Eskimo appeared and descended to the little beach. I got out and met him. He had little English and we had a hard time beginning. His name was Abel.

"Come schooner?"

"No, inland," I said, and pointed west. No one ever came from there, he knew, and looked worried; I was not telling the truth. Not much more was said. As we talked the tinkle of a tin kettle came from the canoe, and looking back I saw a large dog walking away with my boiled loon across his mouth, showing his side teeth at the other dogs, who were close along but did not dare to take hold. I was out of meat.

Old Abel looked awhile into the new canoe, with its handsome varnished cedar lining, finally saying, "Fine kayak!" Presently came three or four women with a good catch of sea trout in a "flat," a little dory-like skiff. It was their voices I had heard, behind the island, shouting and laughing about the net as the big trout splashed them. Three of them were Eskimo beyond disguise; the other was not very dark and spoke English, though with effort and as if long disused. Her husband, old Abel's son, Antone, was away at the post. Yes, there was a passage, a rattle, at the end of this water. They were uneasy, and soon went to splitting the fish. I relinquished an unannounced plan of dining with them, but remarked that they ought to give me a fish, as their dog had taken my meat. "You can have two,"

with an inflection which meant "if you will only go away"; but one six-pound trout was certainly enough. In an experienced way Mrs. Antone pricked its back with the point of a knife to test its fatness and quality. They need not have been afraid, their eleven dogs would have finished me in a moment. Rather soon I put off. Some way off they called out something about taking the *little* rattle, but I did not go back to talk it over. The stillness was suddenly broken, a little later, by a huge thunder sound from seaward, behind the islands. A silence of some seconds followed, then a rending, broken roar. A loud shout came from the Eskimo behind. For ten minutes the affair went on, an invisible phenomenon of great impressiveness in the peace and stillness of the day. It was only a berg foundering outside, but the air was so transparent to sound at the time that its being at least two or three miles away seemed incredible. I would have given much to see it happen. A Newfoundlander has told me that once a wave from a foundering berg in one of their great bays washed a man off a rock seven miles away!

I had gathered a dry pole from a beach somewhere back, leaving the roots on in default of an axe. Now, with a slight breeze, I used it for a mast, the luggage piled effectively upon the spreading roots; but the breeze died. At the end of the bay were high rocks and a passage a few hundred yards wide. Passing along peacefully in glassy water I suddenly noticed that the shores were flying back at the rate of some fourteen miles an hour, and almost at once the place became torn by most astonishing cross-currents and whirlpools. Just ahead two whirlpools lay like a pair

of spectacles. I skimmed the edges of both. Nothing but the elusive model of the boat, with a bit of help at the right time, saved the day. She was a living waterfowl in such water, that boat. Everything thrashed about for a few hundred yards, when the canoe shot out suddenly into still water, almost at right angles to my course of beginning.

The day seemed to be holding out well as to incidentals. This was the Big Rattle, where a large salt water lake, several miles across, has to fill by a narrow, bent channel in a very short time. In extreme tides the manifestations of the place are amazing. The Little Rattle is an inoffensive passage near by on the east, fairly swift at times, but never acrobatic.

There is one other channel leading into the lake, small and dry at low tide. There the inflow was coming in so strong that I went ashore and boiled the big trout while waiting for the current to ease. It was my first ample, deliberate meal for some days. But one cannot travel hard and eat correspondingly. Once in a while when steady on the road a great meal may do, but one must not let out that way too often.

The rest of the day was true to type for the region; breezes wandered this way and that way, ahead, behind, and across, with calms between. Miles from shore, sometimes, a calm spot would be well taken up by mosquitoes. My gloves were an inch short, and my wrists arrived at a curious sandpaper complexion; they must have had a thousand bites in the course of that week.

By eleven that night I fetched up on the south side of Opetik, not far from the house of George. It was hard to find a place to sleep, on the steep

rocks, but there was wood, and supper over I tried a slope of small stones, like crusher stone, but found myself slipping down again and again most uncomfortably. It was a miserable place. Mosquitoes, one at a time, managed to get under my net. About one o'clock I looked out and dawn was gaining in the east; out of patience I threw off the blanket and net. There was no use trying to sleep and I started a fire, sitting over it. When the smoke rose and parted the mosquitoes I fell forward, instantly asleep, but wrenched myself awake before my face struck the firewood. For twenty minutes this wretchedness went on in really painful recurrence; later, after a bite and some strong tea, I paddled slowly over to George's, a couple of miles, feeling in truth pretty slack. George heard the dogs,—it was three o'clock,—and put his head out. I had felt a touch of responsibility about him, he might have had an accident and not reached home.

He had not had a happy time of it. Reaching Opetik River that day he had made a smoke, the neighborhood signal for a boat. The Edmundses thought we had come back and were camping there, so paid no attention, as we had the canoe. That night it rained, the night I was under the canoe on Side Brook, and George had to tough it out. It was afternoon the next day, I think, before he was taken over. When the neighbors heard his story they were near the lynching point at what he had done, being themselves of a different sort, and foreseeing, moreover, a bad job hunting me up. Mrs. G., another sort too, was relieved to see me. With George himself I had little talk; he said something about having gone along if his boots had not been thin.

Mrs. G. did me as well as she could; after a second breakfast I got something of a nap, but had been too long without sleep and soon turned out again.

It had been reported from the post that Cotter was going to Spracklin's with his little schooner the next morning; accordingly Johnny Edmunds and George were going down at once with trout. In time we started; it was hot and calm, and though we rowed and sculled as we could it was slow going. I missed a good black bear on the way. It is possible that the jacketed bullet rode the very oily lands in the barrel and went high, for I never held better. The disgrace of the episode was unpleasant. At midnight our prospects were bad, with fifteen miles to go. Then I slumped, done up, stretched myself on a pile of pickled trout, and slept real sleep again at last. It was certainly time. Once I woke enough to feel the boat careened and driving at a great pace. A north wind had come on, by five we were at the Inlet. Cotter had not started and there was time to eat and get ready before putting off with him. We had a blue and white run, above and below, to the Cape Harbor — a late start and an early landing. There is such a thing as having had enough of the fray, and through the trip I sat below deck with Cotter in full content, without looking out that I remember.

Things had happened well; after all, there is something in making the most of favoring weather. In a white northwester a canoe is not the thing among these high shores, for one can never tell where gusts will come from. The tide crotches bobble and kick up into three-cornered seas; in funnel passages the waves drive up yeasty, and

ugly drives of wind shoot out from the steeper rocks. It is best for little craft to keep *very* near such shores, or very far away.

The Cape harbor where we landed is west from Fanny's, divided from it by a thousand yards of easy low ground. The distance around outside is several miles, for Fanny's looks east and the Cape harbor west and north. Cotter had come down for salt which Spracklin had stored for him at the Cape.

The Spracklins had fish; namely, cod. Nothing is fish to a Newfoundlander but cod,—cod alone. Salmon are salmon, trout are trout, the same with herring, caplin, and the rest; but to him cod only is Fish. He may go fishing for any of these, for almost anything that swims, for to him life is fishing, but he would hardly use the word unqualified of anything but cod. Never intimate to him that his Fish is not the most game of all its kind,—indeed its tail kicks the surface in acres sometimes, and it will take a fly,—nor that the rock-cod is much above the sculpin.

The great beds of fish which once lay on the surface in sheltered waters are only a tradition now; either there are fewer fish, or the traps cut them off outside; the wholesale work of the cod trap has had its effect in one way or another. In old days a buoy or box thrown over would be attacked with vigor by the fish. Caplin were scarce; now, the balance of nature disturbed, their enemy absent, they swarm the waters at times, their eggs pile in windrows on the beaches. Salt, enough salt for the fish, was the only concern of the bay people then, the fish were sure and came well up into the bays. They are intercepted now with the salmon that used to come to the rivers.

The people still have the rock-cod, largely a winter fish. The locked bays of winter are safe from the schooners.

So with the sea birds of the old days, the myriads that filled the air in the time of Aububon. The number of schooners that go north has crept from a few hundred up to three thousand, each with several guns; their crews, men and boys, are intimate with the habits of the creature life of the coast; little is willingly spared. They know where to find the eggs; they can handle well the heavy seal guns. But at least nothing is wasted; they use all, and betimes the "inexhaustible North" replenishes somewhat the supply.

The Spracklins had a few hundred quintals (said "kintle") of fish, taken in the last few days. Cotter hurried back with his load of salt, for his schooner was leaking, and drowned salt runs away. The weather turned totally bad (*vide* moral for travelers: make the most of good weather), and Skipper Tom being short handed I did what I could on the fish stage. My vacation time was fairly up, three to five weeks was what I had counted on; it would be nearer seven before I could get home. The mailboat was about due.

My function at the stage was "tending table," pitchforking fish from the pen to the table, and wheeling away the barrows of split fish to be piled, and though mine was the humblest role of all, even at that I won more in the way of appetite and ability to sleep nights on my folded lance-net bed than of distinction. "There is tending and *tending*," said one of the crew *apropos* of my efforts. They not only wanted me to keep the fish coming, but to place them so as to be conveniently seized — reasonably enough. Their

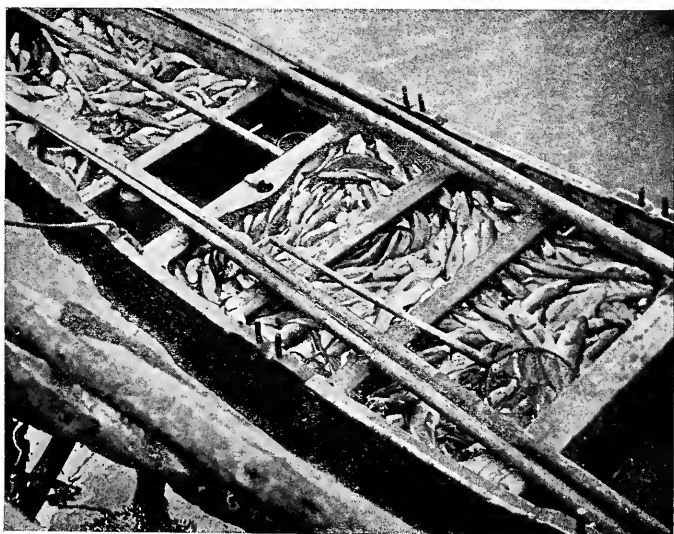
whole season's catch may come in a few days. Then the crew works pretty well around the clock. Ellen, the young woman who cooked, and well indeed, for ten persons, who kept the house clean and in order, and did washing, and kept neat, and came with a run and a jump when called, also worked long at the fish table evenings and at odd times. Stout little Jane, beaming with wily Spracklin's praise, stood for incredible hours enveloped in her big apron, cutting and tearing, cutting and tearing, stopping scarcely for meals. Four hours' sleep the crew were getting then. Poor Spracklin, his arms and wrists set with fish boils, "pups" in the vernacular, slept with his bandaged arms raised clear of all touch, in his face the look of the overworn. Yet all were cheerful; the fish were on. Many a fisherman on shore or schooner sees no fish. Then they live scantily, biscuit and tea, biscuit and tea, and not the best; their little pork is precious. We see them in passing on the mailboat. They are strong men, but their eyes grow absent as the season wanes, and their women's. No wonder they hunt the islands.

The foul weather lasted three or four days; ice came in, the nets were damaged, and it became too rough for the fishing. I turned to outrigging the canoe for rowing, using for a rowlock a single wood pin with a rope withe, the Newfoundlander's shooting rig. The arrangement is silent, the oars can be dropped alongside without going adrift, and they row well. The pins were forty-two inches apart, a fair spread for seven and a half foot oars; these last I got out of long oars of Spracklin's that were past use; blades are best narrow for sea work, say four inches.





SPRACKLIN



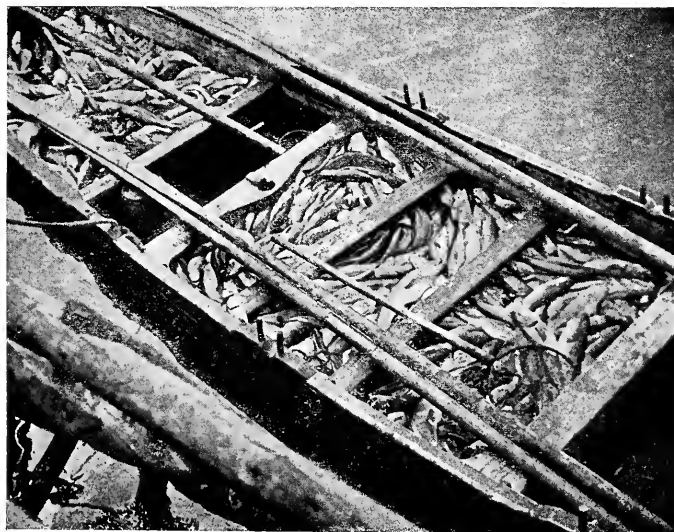
COD

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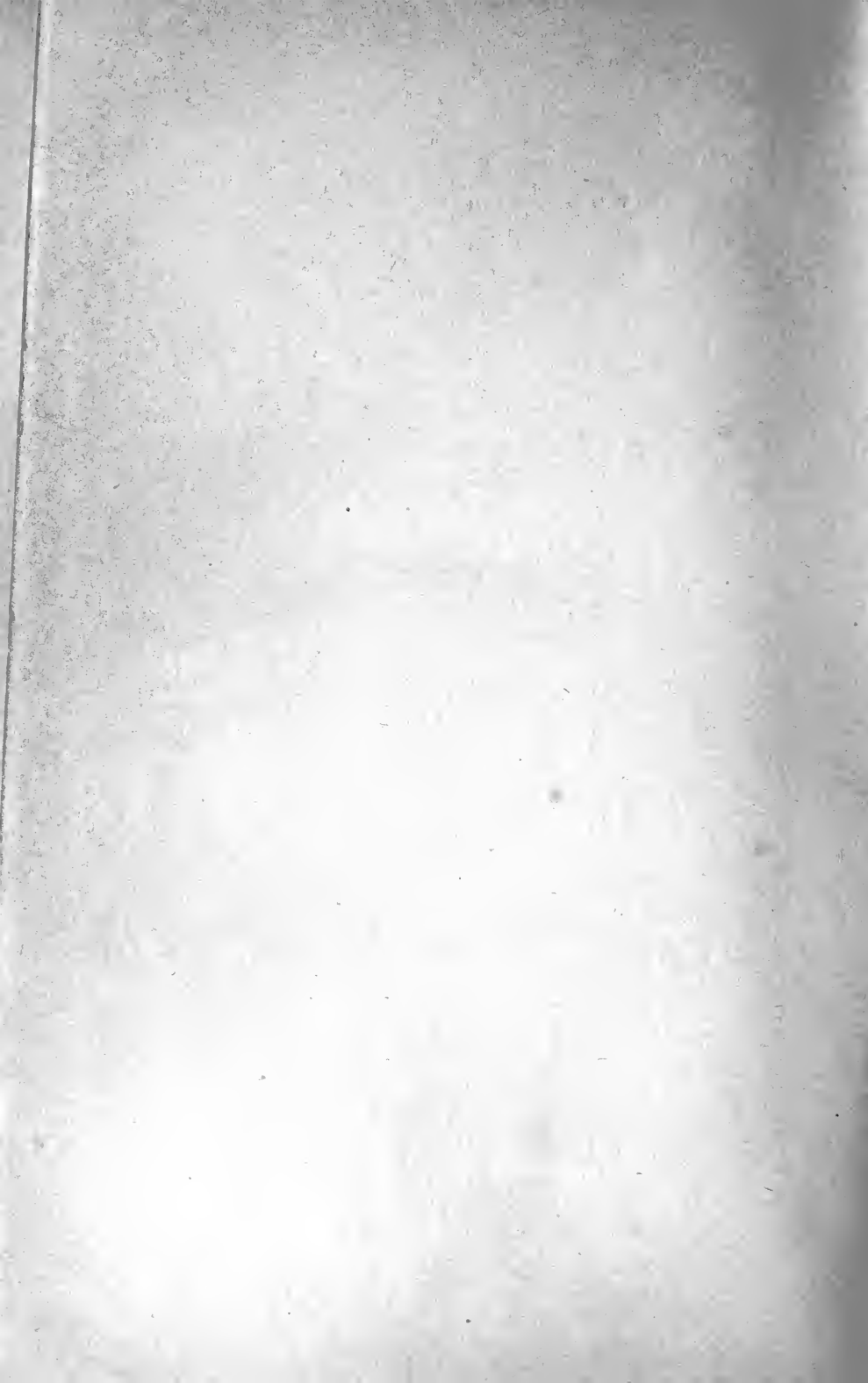
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SPRACKLIN



COD



That canoe, eighteen feet by thirty-three inches, could be pushed up to a speed of near or quite six miles an hour, so rigged, carrying a hundred pounds of baggage; and with the rower sitting five or six inches from the bottom, close against the middle bar, would take irregular and trying seas in a perfectly unbelievable way. The fishermen were naturally skeptical about canoes for coast travel, and had me on their minds; no one in such places likes to see foolish risks taken; Skipper Jim, in particular, made predictions. But later on I happened to be outside one day when the crew were hauling a trap. It was true "codfish weather," — fog, the wind on the shore, the air rawness itself. A sea was coming in, making with the backwash from the rocks a very broken "lop." Wanting to take a kodak snap at the operation going on I threw a short line over a pin in the other boat and let my craft pivot about as she liked. Spracklin looked my way now and then, but said nothing. Going back I led them in, of course, for they were loaded. At dinner something was said about the canoe, and I remarked to Spracklin, "You see she will do almost what a dory will." "She'll do what a dory *won't!*" he returned, and no one bothered about me after that.

As the days went we wondered about the mailboat; she might be on the bottom. When at last the weather turned fine the invitation of it became too much, and of an afternoon I rowed for Davis Inlet. Beyond the Cape Islands is a stretch of flat shoals, and before I quite got my bearings a long sweeper gathered, broke, and ran by with a wicked scream. Anything but flat shoals and a swell on a falling tide! These occasional reminders are chastening. But it was a

different matter now from working slowly along with one paddle, the butt of everything that came. Now the sure ability to pull away from any lee shore, to drive, if slowly, into a white-topped sea, put a new face on things. One needs to feel the master in such matters. There was no more wondering whether I was gaining or going back, no more desperate holding to the gusts that strove to broach. Now only the easy swing to the oars; there was no swerving, the canoe ran true. It was singular how slight a shifting of a pack fore or aft with the feet counteracted the wind push to right or left. The canoe did the rest, meeting, balancing, lifting over, a creature water bred. She passed into other hands when I left that year, and was finally wrecked. Never was her like.

There was a drawback, a real disadvantage: one could not see ahead. Ducks and sea pigeons squattered from under the bow, seals sank silently and unperceived; gulls moved on and kept away; I missed their companionship, and sometimes the meal they might have furnished. One has to turn and look ahead now and then for shoals and landmarks, but the neck rebels as the hours go on, the rhythm of the oars in calm days makes the thoughts drowse and drift far away; the low, slow swell makes all for dreams. Well if the ear catch chuck of wave on rock or ice in time; sooner or later a reminding scrape or thump is sure to come.

One needs to see ahead; going backward is a crude way. For years I had it in mind that bow-facing oars should be the thing, and too late, in 1910, tried them out in home waters. They were the thing indeed; they were as fast as any oars,

as easy to use, and I rued the years I had needlessly gone without them.

It was calm throughout the day. Four or five grampuses circled about, but not near enough for intimacy; they are semi-solitary, for though common enough I have never seen more than five in a bay at once, and these scattered about. Most others of the whale kind seem inclined to go in families. A dense flock of "ticklers," the charming kittiwakes, came close about my shoulders. If the fishermen knock one down the others stay close about and are easy victims. They hover about the fish schools, indeed the occasional flick of a cod's tail explained their presence now. According to the fishermen it is small, oily bubbles rising from the fish that the ticklers are after. How these are produced, though they may be from the caplin and other prey seized and mangled by the cod, does not certainly appear.

It is the sounds, perhaps, more than the sights, that rouse one dreaming along through the spaces of these endless mirrored days. They simulate more familiar ones. The raven's first croak may come through the rippling of the dividing bow as the distant bark of a dog that is not; the "wailing waby's lonely cries," from desolate bays, as the voice of some forsaken animal afar. From somewhere ahead comes a perfect human hail, "Ah! There!"—and one turns involuntarily to see who has called, but it is only a pair of the great black-backs that have launched from some high nesting place and come in apprehension to meet and protest their misgivings. Strange it is to have revealed the undreamed pairing-time vocabulary of this beautiful but silent winter visitor of our shores. From my diary, "The great saddle-back

gulls hailed from a distance, anxious for their young on the islands, and wheeling over with a surprising vocabulary of protesting and ejaculatory sounds: 'Aaa-ha! — Aaali! — Guk! — Kuk! — Huh! — Ooh!' all in a distressed voice, harsh yet plaintive. They might be saying, 'We can't do anything if you come! We can't do anything, we can't help it, but we can't help protesting! Ooh!' and their careworn cries go on.

"They are beautiful large gulls, white below and soft black gray above; one would never expect their forlorn intonations."

There is something wrong, or at least depressing, in the cries of almost all the gulls. One has to get used to them. Serenity itself to the eye their voices are as of spirits broken for their sins.

"Dense schools of caplin (cápe-lin) sometimes wrinkled the surface. They are much like smelts, and may be dipped up readily with a hand net. Cod disgorge them on the stage and in the boats, as do sea trout. They are more slender and delicate than smelt, as wanting substance by comparison. The fishermen speak of their spawning in the kelp along the shore and of seeing the spawn at a distance.

"Once or twice I took to the paddle for a change, but rowing was much more effective and less tiring. The canoe is too large for one paddle. . . . Toward the inlet the tide helped; it was 7.45 when I pulled up to the dock and surprised Cotter. A great supper of sea trout and bake apple (cloud-berry) jam, matched only by my appetite, after merely a couple of biscuit on the way up. Both Cotter and Spracklin have very good spruce beer. C.'s ship, the *Pelican*, is not in, and he is in great fret about it. No Indians yet."



"In the morning some one announced Indians before we were up. There were eight of them, from George River. Three or four are tall, good men, of strong Cree type. Most wear deerskin coats, but some have cloth shirts over them, covering also the skin breechcloth. The visible skin coats of the others show a painted pattern around the borders. Their inner shirts are of young or unborn caribou, with the short, fine hair turned in. They are inclined to be chilly in our raw coast air, the interior is warmer. The Post finds shelter and provisions for them while here, the latter no trifling matter, for they are apt to eat little the last days coming in. Cotter says they ate twenty-two pounds of hard bread to-day, besides pork.

"My dealing with them is rather difficult on the whole. Their intonation is high and nasal, and their dialect peculiar. They understand my Montagnais talk rather fairly, few words at a time, but I do not attempt anything ambitious. The camera they are shy about; one of them I got only by snapping from the side, unknown to him. The others were better, small plugs of tobacco modified their objections, and in the end I had them all, in some sort. Most of our talk was about the country. Pleasant old Kátshiuas, whose name nevertheless means "Always cross," gave me a good map of their route to the coast, but in some mysterious way it disappeared later and I never saw it again. Kámoques, "Porcupine eater," also made one, but it was vague. They are wary about strangers.

Then it was that I learned from Katshiuas that the Indian House Lake of Low's map was only a narrow affair, no wider than the run in front of the post, and my long-cherished vision of a broad,

imposing water, possibly larger even than as shown conjecturally on the map, and the best objective for a season's trip in all Labrador, vanished once for all. As a feature of more than ordinary interest the lake departed from my mind.

K. told me quite a little about the country. There was wood enough along the route. Once out of the Assiwaban and up the "*Tshishkatinau kapitagan*," the high portage—here his arm stretched almost vertically—"It is high! high!"—there was no stream work, all was lake and portage,—"*pémishkau, kapitágan*," paddle and portage, all the way. *Mistinípi*, "Great Lake," was the largest water. There were plenty of caribou on the George that year. "They are everywhere!" Katshiwas told me truly, in all things.

The first impression that the Naskapi make on one is apt to be vivid and a little mixed. Their irresponsible thin legs and bare thighs, and their horsetail hair, are decidedly not of our world, though the latter is generally docked at the shoulders. They have a nasal twang, which in the excitement of arrival, and at such times they are not impassive, becomes almost a whine. Their travel clothing is nondescript and dingy; though as to this, again, they know how to do better, and in new white skin clothing are wholly picturesque. But as untamed aborigines, Stone Age people, they lay hold of one. The look in their eyes is the look of the primitive man of the open.

Yet it is not too easy to picture from them a primitive man of our own strain. Their unmodified raciality, which impresses one strongly at first meeting, is probably as far from our own as that of any high race in the world. To a white person

not used to them, their presence becomes easily trying. It puts one into a curious tension which becomes uncomfortable, one wants to go away, shortly, for readjustment. This is mainly, I think, a matter of genius; from us they are apart beyond most other children of earth. Soon after they came I touched one of them with my finger and he shrank as if stung. Among themselves even they keep more apart than white men do. Restlessly they stepped about, keen eyed. They were not used to the level boards.

I had meant to go back at midday to take up the unwilling task of catching the steamer, but the temptation to have more of the Indians was too much and I waited through the afternoon. Quiet had settled upon the place; there could be little trading until the *Pelican* should come with her cargo. The strangeness of the Indians wore away somewhat, and their voices fell agreeably. Their ordinary tones fall in almost indistinguishably with the rhythmic sounds of the open, the wind and running water and lip of the waves. After all, we had subjects in common, and talked as best we could of these things.

We of the post had kept something of a lookout for the steamer during the day without result, but after seven a plain smoke appeared beyond the horizon in the usual route of the mailboat. She would naturally go to Nain and be back possibly by noon next day. Thus I had time enough to get to Fanny's, and without much risk might have waited until morning, but there was the old question of weather, and it was calm now. As it turned out I should have fared worse to have waited.

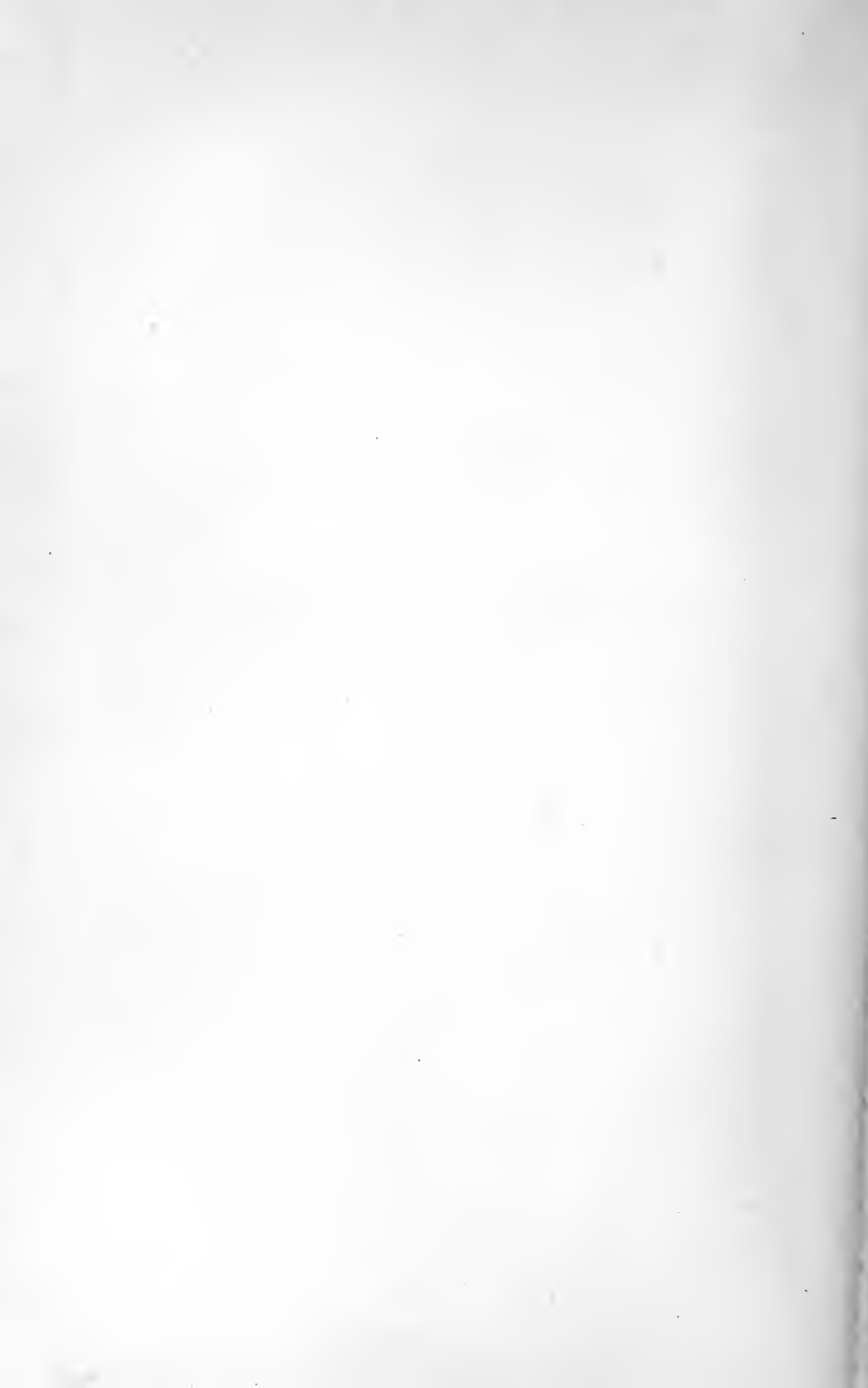
Cotter and others about urged me to stay; the tide was wrong, night was no time to travel alone,

I could start early. But I was stiff about it, arguing that it was now calm, and would be until daylight, but that fog comes in the morning, and the fog brings the wind. There was no hurry; we had a farewell supper and it was nine when I left. The Indians gathered at the landing, looking rather serious. They do not like night travel overwell. All the unseen powers are active then. Travel by night alone is the worst of all.

For a while I used the paddle, keeping close inshore out of the current, then took to the oars. I had thinned the oar blades to perfect balance in C.'s shop, and tightened the withes into silence; things went well. For six miles the current was wrong, dying out finally; there was then no swell to speak of. By eleven the afterglow in the north was faint, but was replaced by northern lights, shifting and wavering in a long, flat arch, and at times as bright as moonlight. I watched the sky for signs of wind, for the landing places along were not too good, and the only good shelter would be far down one of the two large bays. Half way across the first bay the swell began to increase and sound heavy on the islands eastward. Edging farther away from them, toward the mainland, a strong uproar of surf came from the south point of the bay. By this time it was midnight, and dark save for the stars and the brighter periods of the north sky. Saddle-back gulls wailed once or twice from their islands, sounding familiar and friendly — in truth, they sounded a good deal more friendly than the roaring shores. The noise, the darkness, and the unusual heave of the sea were getting to be impressive. Night doings take a little extra hardihood. Before long I lost the identity of the shore lines and became uncertain



KAMOQUES



of my course. The tide was passing out from the deep bays, and once without landmarks it became doubtful where I was getting to. I had edged for the mainland, yet might have been going seaward by set of tide, which in any event prevented my taking a straight course and holding to it. It was confusing, and after listening to the surf awhile and remembering the shallow points that might break at any time and bring on an ice-water interruption, I concluded that open sea was the place, and pulled for it. The oars would bring me back; it would have been doubtful business with only a paddle. By one o'clock I felt sure I was off Lane's Bay and was easier as the roar of the west point of the bay receded. Cotter had given me a half loaf of bread, and now and then I gnawed at it, shifting off my seat into the bottom of the canoe for change of position. Rowing in so small a craft as a canoe one has to keep in exactly the same position, and gets stiff in time. When the sound of breakers came equally from east and west I supposed I was off the middle of the bay, and lay to, now munching bread and now rowing a little for circulation, waiting for light. There was still no wind. A grampus snorted about, and now and then I knocked well on the gunwale, in the interest of fair play.

Dawn came late. A heavy bank of fog not far seaward shut back the early light. At that season the sun creeps along almost level under the horizon during the early hours, and heavy cloud or fog is very effective in keeping back the day. Fog had been working in from seaward for several hours, a dense black wall, rising higher and higher. By the time I could see the landmark hill at the Cape harbor, some six miles away, the fog began

to touch the top of it. Then I rowed fast, to get over the wide shoals before the fog reached them. These shoals were what I had held back for in the night. With such an unusual swell and a falling tide it would not do to wander along over them at random. They were the serious feature of the trip.

It was near five when I made out the Cape hill and started past the shoals. There was wind now, from east. Things were going well enough, when suddenly a coming swell rose high and stood for an instant as if looking down at me. There was not much to be done, but I threw the bow up to make the best of it, twisting the boat head on. As luck would have it the wave passed, and the usual two more nearly as large, without breaking, as follows from my writing this, and I swung back into the trough again. If ever any one pulled to get away from a place it was then, and she was a wonder in the trough, that unnamed canoe of 1903; like a snake she would run down the hollows. But the look of that standing wave, hanging over in the dark morning, is one of my Labrador memories. Anything but flat shoals and a swell, on a falling tide!

The fog swirled in thick as I reached sheltered water. It was no matter. I slapped down my pocket compass into the bottom of the canoe before it could change its course, and went on well, though it was blind work at the end of the harbor.

All creatures come close in such fog. Twenty or thirty eiders flew almost aboard. Ticklers had been all about as the fog came on, and another bunch of eiders came very close.

Laying out the canoe, rather as a friend never



to be seen again, I did the two miles and more across the island to Spracklin's with a pack which felt heavy. I had no doubt of getting the steamer. During the latter part of the night I heard her whistle, at Fanny's, and took it that she was off north for Nain. To my amazement Spracklin met me in the doorway, with, rather brusquely, "You've lost your passage!" I was so dazed, having had no misgivings at all in the matter, and being sleepy and dense after the doings of the last twenty-four hours, that I could not really sense the situation until after breakfast. The mailboat had passed north early the day before, unseen by us at the inlet, and had left, going south, at the time I heard the whistle. What steamer it was that made the smoke we saw from the post we have never known. For the next fifteen hours, however, disappointment did not keep me awake much.

By the time I had slept up a spell of bad weather was on. The storm out at sea which had pushed the night swell up on the coast had followed in. The surf about the exposed Cape had been heavy through the night, unusually so. Spracklin, of course, heard it; and although there was no wind whatever until early morning, he always imagined from the noise he had heard that a gale had been blowing all night. He really believed it; I could never quite shake it out of him, and for years he told in good faith the story of my night trip by canoe, "in a wild storm alone." He made a good yarn of it, if a hard one for me to live up to. Many a pretty fame, it may be, has no better basis. But to travel conveniently by night in such places one needs to know the shores better than I did, not to speak of shoals and currents. Mere wind can only bother and

force one to land, but shoals and sweepers can be the de'il's own.

Spracklin always did have imagination, and more. So far as he himself was concerned, wind and sea only stirred his blood. One of the pictures of him that I like, though I did not see the happening, is as coming in through the harbor entrance low down with fish, a following wave filling the boat, the two Labradorians climbing the mast, but Spracklin remaining unmoved at the tiller. He finally brought his load of fish alongside the stage, *the water up to his mouth*. He could not swim.

One year I came along just after he had had an experience crossing to Lane's Bay alone in his jack, a deep, stout boat of some tons burden, over waters already described. Near, to the south, was that stronghold of Æolus, Windy Tickle. From there, perhaps, came the whirlwind which tore up the sea and flailed off his masts in an instant, he as helpless as if in an explosion. For once in his life he made that quick mental *congé* of things earthly which wayfarers of less firm clay have made with smaller cause. The boat lived, how he knew not, and he limped home under such rig of remnants as he could improvise. The sea had betrayed him at last, and his face and voice showed it.

Things were not too well at Fanny's. The fishing fell off with the storm, and did not much recover; the total catch had been less than five hundred quintals. I was sorry for the people; they deserved more than they could possibly get. Then Spracklin's trap had to come out, for some reason, and Jim's likewise, for a two-pointed berg blew in and cut it up badly. Pieces of the berg

came into the harbor at night, one so large that it seemed perfectly impossible for it to have come through the narrow entrance. Now there was "no twine in the water"; the fisherman's dark day had come. By this time the wear of round-the-clock work had begun to show on the crew. Ellen was the worse for the pace, but kept us going somehow. Little Jane was still working like a tiger on the stage, for there were some fish ahead in the pens and bagnets when the traps gave out. I was about the stage too, for more than exercise, coming to see that forking and loading are really work when long continued. My reward, the particular bright spot, as I look back, was Ellen's piled plates of "heads and sounds," better even than the fish proper; and this is much to say, for all Newfoundlanders know how to deal with Fish, and at their hands and in their several ways of getting it up it is always good. Sunday breakfast, where fishing goes on, is ever Brewis, "Fish and Bruise." The fish part is well enough; I was wont to pick it out very contentedly; but my share of the soppy hardbread which constitutes bruise generally went to Spracklin's hens.

Storms from sea, after the fish are in, blow them inshore up the bays, where they fatten and come back by September. The thick-tailed ones are picked out for the table, as being best conditioned. We had two small salmon before the nets were damaged, a change and a treat, but they pall on one after two or three meals, unlike Fish.

Save for Ellen's cooking everything was a little out of joint; the wind was truly east. Water being scarce, a common occurrence in the islands, it had to be brought from the hill in a hand-barrow tank. Lest the blue time should extend itself

to my personal interests, I took a turn across the island one day and weighted the canoe with more stones, though it was doing well. A run of bad luck in such a place is a thing to make one wary. The fishermen are apt to regard special misfortunes as punishments for lapses of conduct, particularly Sabbath-breaking. Spracklin insisted that Skipper Jim's trouble with the ice came from having straightened out his trap the Sunday before.

This was the rawest black weather of the summer. The wind came straight from the Greenland ice-cap and Melville Bay, across some hundreds of miles of berg-bearing sea. The end came after some days. Marvelous is the change from one of these dark, cold periods to mild calm sunshine, cheering the light on rock and dying surf. Unchained from the mailboat incubus I was soon off on the old shimmering road to the Inlet, taking in the Labrador air as naturally as the creatures of the place. These were all about; grampuses that roved across the wake and blew; black-backs that launched out and hailed "Ah-there"; kittiwakes in fluttering flocks; caplin, and the flicking cod. Inspiring were the daylight and the shining folk of air and sea after the doubting night voyage that had been. Ah, the lighted day! Chaos and night are much one to sightless man; almost all the other creatures, they of the finer senses, if not the higher, see better than man when night is down.

A far crying, as of some creature of fox-like size, came from distant islands seaward. I could imagine it running up and down in the desolation. Later I knew it for the waby, the red-throated loon.

Half way along was Sam Bromfield coming from

the post, with such news as there was. The *Pelican* was in, and more Indians. The post people had been speculating about me, seeing the sea and fog come on, but concluded that I would probably get out of the trouble in some way. Sam had my rifle on his mind, but I could not promise it to him then. He gave me a couple of sticks for spars, but my breeze never came; and worse, the tide was wrong in the run.

The day was well along before I landed on the post beach, where a dozen tall Indians stood waiting upon the wharf. Ashimāganish was one, the chief. "Quay! Quay!" we saluted, in the way of the Cree tribes. As I climbed up on the wharf he gave a shout and the others surrounded the loaded canoe, picked it up lightly and put it up on the wharf — a friendly act.

Eighteen more Indians had come, there were twenty-six in all. Some would have counted as good men anywhere, and there were several handsome boys. We were acquainted now, and they humanized a good deal; matters of race appeared less insuperable than before. I found it easier to talk with the older men; perhaps they had seen more of such occasions; but age seeks its level.

The *Pelican* was anchored out in the run when I arrived. Cotter was aboard, and I had supper on shore alone. About dark he came hunting me up at the men's quarters, where I was sitting in with the Indians, and took me off, seeming a little upset until we were settled in the house. He was excited at leave of absence in the fall, it meant a winter in London and Edinboro'. He had never been over, and naturally the prospect was gilded; his mind was already there, and my talk of things near had little response.

So it always is with the younger Hudson's Bay Company men after leave is granted. A young Canadian of the service, with relations in England, showed the same excitement as Cotter in his preparations. The people of the posts ask very simply about things of the world, and so this young man, though he had once been to school in a large Canadian city. The talk had all to be upon London and the way of things there, and above all upon clothes. Cost entered little, for these people beyond the money line all feel passing rich. Their salaries are small, but, willy nilly, in their wantless life they can scarcely help saving. The total sum in a lifetime can only be small as the world goes, but the financial tide is always rising. One day they emerge into the world and the scales fall from their eyes.

In the case referred to the young man had not lived in the world for nothing, and flinched a little by the time I was done with the matter of coats and trousers and costs. He saw me as flying a little high; one wouldn't really need all those things. In due time I happened to meet him just returning. He was still sturdy, a little redder; he had had a good time. But he thought, on the whole, it was as well for one to live in the country one belonged to.

One ought to have letters of introduction in going to a Hudson's Bay Company post. Now I suffered a disadvantage in not having them. The rules are rather strict about putting strangers into relation with the Indians and the hunting country. The good people of the post had placed themselves in a doubtful position by doing what they had, and they had now become doubtful lest I meant to set up in trade with their Indians.

Their doubts were not very farfetched; they saw that I was an old hand, my outfit was untourist-like, and I had more use of the Indian language than any one along the shore. Among the shore people there had been abundant speculation as to my purposes from the first. They were shrewdly sure that I must be either looking for minerals or intending to trade. The Newfoundlanders believed I was after gold; Spracklin indeed begged me to let him in on what I might find. It was announced in the St. John's papers one year that we had found gold in paying quantities and were going to develop it in a large way. The shore folk, however, held the fur theory.

Until now the Hudson's Bay Company people had kept a steady head. There had even been an understanding that when the *Pelican* had come and gone, and the Indians were off, some one of them would make a trip inland with me, if I was still there to go. One of these people had once been a hundred miles inland, as he reckoned it, by dog train, with William Edmunds and two Southern Indians. They had gone up river from Opetik Bay, due west; this I suspect was compass west, really almost southwest, and the distance, two and a half days of good sledging, was probably less than was thought. The coast distances hold out well — are based on the sea mile, perhaps, the "long sea mile" of John Silver and *Treasure Island*. Inland miles are another matter, they grow shorter and shorter as the shoreman's home places and inseparable salt water fall behind. What turned the Hudson's Bay Company party back was Indians, not snowshoe tracks or imaginary Indians, but the very men they were with. For some reason best known to themselves they an-

nounced to the outsiders that they did not want them to go any farther into the country and actually threatened violence. Our white man was disposed to be militant, but William's enthusiasm fell away and they turned back. This may have been well; it was then not so very long since some of the northern Indians had set out to rush Davis Inlet post, being denied what they asked.

The projected trip inland was now off, of course, I being a doubtful person. The feasibility of making an arrangement with the Indians was also lessened, for their keen observation had not missed the change of atmosphere, and they are not apt to take much trouble for a person of doubtful standing among his own people. Whether it was the prevailing talk of the shore people, or, more likely, the counsels of cautious old Captain Gray, of the *Pelican*, that upset things, I never knew. At the time I only thought them all, though mistaken to the joking point, a shining example of carefulness in the interest of the Hudson's Bay Company. Admirable servants! I praised them for it to my friend, Peter McKenzie, the manager in Montreal, the next winter.

Here does come a joke, rather on the other side. Some time afterward, one of the post people called on me in Boston, and seeing the easy absurdity of his former notion, told me something I had not thought of. He had been at the end of his contract with the Hudson's Bay Company that year and was thinking of setting up for himself in trade with the Indians. The journey inland with William was to find a site for a trading store. His worry about me, it appeared, was mainly for himself; he was guarding his own preserves.



There are coils and coils. This idea of an inland trading post was known to William, whose best perquisite was the boating of Indians to Davis Inlet at a dollar a head. William's interest was clear; if the trading went inland he would be the loser. It was believed by those interested that he had intrigued with the Indians to defeat the enterprise.

With whatever of cross-currents the days that followed this fourth arrival at the post were sufficiently unvexed and full of interest. Indians were everywhere, the old Hudson's Bay people and the shore folk always had something to say, and my note book grew, if less than it ought. The oldest of the Hudson's Bay Company people, Mr. Dickers, in his active days a carpenter in the service, had been long at Fort Chimo on Ungava Bay. The second generation, John and James, were the active men here at Davis Inlet now, the latter a cooper, who made the rows of handsome barrels that the sea trout were shipped in, while John was general right-hand man of the post. They were Scotch, almost of course, being of the Hudson's Bay Company. I ought to have saved more from these people's talk than I did. The elder Dickers had lived in the romantic period of the North, in the days when fur was all and Indians came and went over the wide North as they never will again; yet I, young when Ballantine's tales were young, and Dick Prince and Dog Crusoe and Chimo and Ungava were stirring names, have little to tell. What questions I should have asked! They spoke mainly of the Eskimo. There were inland Eskimo, little people, who came to Chimo from the northwest. They hunted quite away from the shores. There were

ordinary Eskimo who made sometimes six weeks' journeys to Ungava, bringing kómetiks piled four feet high with furs, and they would return with tobacco by the hundredweight, and maybe rifles, five or six of them; but they bought no provisions of the post.

As ever, there were tales of trouble from infringement of hunting territory, as when somewhere about Ungava a ship's crew, beset, took to hunting deer themselves. The Eskimo, in resentment, scuttled the ship while the men were away hunting. No less the primeval tale of women stealing, and the Eskimo has a heavy hand. It was forty or fifty years ago. The company's ship was wrecked, and the crew separated in two boats. The mate, Armstrong, brought his crew out at Ungava. The captain's sailors made trouble with the Eskimo women, whereupon the men turned in and killed the whole white party. In more recent years an Ungava Eskimo killed a very large white bear with his knife alone.

The Indians were busy between ship and shore for a day or two, putting through the heavy job of transferring freight. Along with lighter goods was much that was not easy to handle, such as flour and pork, besides the weighty hogsheads of molasses. In the intervals the workers spread about the place in a vacation spirit, as if making the most of their excursion. One evening the younger ones got out Cotter's football. They were active, and there was a good deal of fun, though moccasin-foot kicking is not very effective. Once the goods were ashore Cotter and his people shut themselves into the store to open the cases and get ready for trading, leaving the Indians outside. We had a good deal of talk. There were eighty people, they

said, left at their place on the George. It took them seven days to come over.

The furs come down in snug, spindle-shaped bundles laced up as with a shoe lacing, the cover being sealskin, hair outside, to keep the water out. Such bundles usually have two carrying lines, one for the head and the other to cross the shoulders. Furs are their money; and some of them, such as the martens, are not much heavier than banknotes; indeed furs are about as current as money almost anywhere in northern Canada.

As to the Kókomesh, the *namáycush* trout, they said it was common in the lakes, up to two and a half feet long and very deep; the depth they emphasized, for depth means both quantity and quality, and the kokomesh is their principal fish. They would not say that there were any very heavy ones, this to my surprise, for some of their lakes are large, and it is certain that in some of the lakes of the Northwest at least, the *namáycush* grows to nearly a hundred pounds' weight. The *fontinalis* was well known, and the whitefish, with various suckers. We agreed easily on the names of the usual animals of the North, and the common birds and trees. They did not understand my name for the north star.

Two or three of them became interested in my prints taken on southern-slope rivers, telling others about them, who came in turn to see. Many of my things were new or unusual to them, beginning with the canoe. They were interested in everything, finally showing, like everybody else, curiosity as to what I was there for. The chief took me off alone one day, and began to quiz: "Tánte tshína kokomínah?" he asked. The words were plain, but I could not believe I had

heard clearly. "Tante tshina kokominah?" he insisted, with emphasis. There was no doubt, he was asking, "Where is your old woman?" Whatever business was it of his? At last it came to me that it was his way of asking where my home was, and I pointed south: "Twelve days in the fireboat — twelve days — night and day, night and day; it is very far"; this in Montagnais, of course. "What are you here for?" I told him I was not a trader, not a hunter, and stayed in my own country most of the time; but once in a while I liked to travel, to go to a new country, to see the animals and birds and fish and trees and the people; then I went back to my country again. He seemed to understand and we drifted into other talk. Before we parted he asked, "Why don't you go inland with us and have a tent and a wife at Tshinutivish?" I told him I should like to go over there tremendously (true enough), but it was getting late in the season, and I really must go back home. I might come up next year. Afterwards I speculated as to whether he expected me to bring along a kokominah, or whether he would have found one for me up there, but the matter would have strained my powers in the language. Still I ought to have asked him.

The Oldtown canoe was a great attraction. They were beginning to use canvas themselves, and knew how limp it was, how hard to make a handsome job with. Indeed, how they can build as shapely a canvas canoe as they do without using a form is hard to see. The symmetry and perfect surface of mine was a despair to them. Long they would stand over it, studying and lifting it; their heads surely swam with being kept upside down in studying out the neat work in the ends. I

should have been glad to explain that they were really better builders than we, that it was no trouble to do such work if one used a form to model on, but I had not the language. I could have sold the canoe easily. They did not like the broad paddles, and in this were right. Katshiuas looked doubtfully at the light gunwale; "Nauáshu," he said, "It is frail," and I tried to explain that the stiffness we get by nailing the sheathing and ribs together made a heavy gunwale unnecessary. In their canoes the gunwale is the very backbone. Katshiuas put his hand upon the cane seat, of which unnaautical device I was duly ashamed. "Do you *sit down here?*" he asked, incredulously, as if pained. They kneel, themselves, low down, sitting upon their heels. I explained, sheepishly, as I had about the paddles, that I did not make these things and knew they were all wrong. Before the trading was over I saw one of the canoe builders buying brass clinching nails; he was evidently going to try them.

I had been giving a piece of tobacco for a camera snap now and then, until the boys used to call out "Tsh'támau!"\* (tobacco) almost any time I appeared in sight, and it came to be expected. One day before trading began the chief asked me if I wanted to take a picture, and grouped up a lot of his people on the platform, while I took three snaps. As I turned away, there was a bedlam of cries for Tsh'tamáu; "Aishkats," "By and by," I said, and pointed to the store; they laughed and scattered. Later in the day I bought twenty-six of the little black plugs they prefer, one for each man, and with pockets and hands full went out, nodding to two or three Indians who were in sight. They saw, disappeared,

\*Tsh-táy-mow.

and presently came back with the rest, surrounding me in wild riot. As fast as one got a plug he mixed in again with the others. There would not have been the least trouble in their coming two or three times apiece, for I could not keep track of them, and I felt sure they would do so. But when they stopped coming there was still one plug left over — the man who had refused to give me a pose had stayed away. I was surprised at this fair play, but experience with more than a hundred individuals since that time has developed nothing but the same sort of thing.

Now came the trading. Most of the furs had been passed in before the ship came, and paid for with colored counters like small poker chips. Yellow ones are \$5, white \$2, red 50 cents, blue 20 cents. This money is used like any other for buying the goods. The older men coach the younger ones in their trading. There is, or was on this occasion, no ill temper, and much laughing as the goods were chosen. The list of items was long.\* Katshinas bought a folding stove. Red handkerchiefs with a pattern were mostly preferred to the blue ones; they bought any number of them. Prices were stiff, a light single shotgun, muzzle loader, was \$16. The chief finally asked for a "debt," that is, something on credit.

"August 4. Two wolverene skins among the rest this morning, also one or two heavy-furred whitish wolf skins, very large; quite a few otter; a good number of white foxes, many reds, and some cross foxes. A black fox fetched \$100.

\*They buy cartridges, powder, shot, tobacco, tea, cloth, shirts, leggings, needles, thread, ribbon, beads, axes, knives, spy-glasses, kettles, Eskimo boots, blankets (white), hooks, lines, mouth-harmonicas, handkerchiefs.



AH-PE-WAT





"It is a tough piece of work for C. to stand all day and deal with them, but he does it admirably. He works pretty fast and there is no great amount of shopping bother such as one might expect. John Dicker and Johnny E. run upstairs, climb shelves, weigh, and measure. It has gone on from six this morning and will hardly be over to-night.

"In a general way a man buys, besides his various personal stuff, a large lot of something like powder, tea, or some one kind of cloth. As there is no sign of discussion among them I take it that this is done by prearrangement, and that a redistribution is made afterwards."

About midday the fifth trading was over. Then a curious change came over the Indians; they had been easy, good natured, leisurely; now they were hurried, unresponsive, silent; they crouched over their bundles intently; their backs seemed always toward one. Two boats were ready, William's and the Hudson's Bay Company's "punt." Without taking leave or looking back they scattered down the wharf and into the boats. The older men got into the punt, eight of them.

They were unmodified wild men again, and disagreeable to boot. I was taken aback, not to say disconcerted, but at any rate I had seen the Naskapi way of leaving a white man's place. Still I could have kicked them, one and all. There are mitigating circumstances, though, when one comes to know why they choose this way.

I decided to go along as far as Opetik anyway, though with no definite plan beyond. Johnny Edmunds had told me that his father would go inland with me, he knew. I might never be on the coast again, and anything observed while I was on

the spot would be so much gain. There was a good chance that I would be able to get some pictures of them in deerskin clothes at Opetik, when they were less covered by the wretched cloth things which most were wearing outside, and I might even make some arrangement to go along with them for a day or two. So I got in with the eighteen younger men, the older ones looking too sour, holding fast to the tow line of the canoe. We were packed like sardines.

The punt, sailed by a bay man named John, started well ahead, and was, withal, a faster boat than ours. We were a fairly companionable mob when once off, and when it went calm off Shung-ho, two of the young fellows asked if they might take the canoe, as of course they might—a good thing, crowded as we were. The outriggers bothered them, and before long they came very civilly to see if they might take them off; once clear of these they paddled a good many miles. When we landed at Jim Lane's I took the canoe and paddled it ashore myself. There was a little slop, and because I did not hold the canoe quite straight, though I thought I was doing very well as the wind was, the young scamps hooted and laughed. Derision is an easy gift of the young Indians, they are quick to see an opening and have all the wit they need. I had suffered a little in dignity from having dropped in with the younger men.

We had rather a good time, naming everything we could see or think of, birds, animals, fish, and trees. At last they found a tree I did not know their name for, and were triumphant, but I had done pretty well. They pointed southwest up the valley from Opetik and said, "Náshkau shébo,"—one could go to Northwest (Nascaupée)

River that way. *Nashkau*, Nishku in Montagnais, is the Canada goose. There is probably a confusion in calling the river Nascaupée, which is a common if an uncomplimentary name for a northern Indian. I had some raisins and chocolate which I passed about, and in turn one of them gave me a piece of indifferent-tasting caribou tallow, which they melt and run into cakes. It was slightly turned.

Johnny E. talked, his eye on my rifle; he was unnecessarily afraid that George would get it, and told how, when I finally gave out the night I boated with him and George to the Inlet, and went to sleep on the fish, G. had helped himself largely to my stock of chocolate and bacon; things which, by the way, I could not replace. I had noticed that these supplies went down remarkably about that time. As it was rather late for Johnny to explain his position as accessory I did not warm toward him. Later he warned me of lice, saying that he often had one or two after boating Indians. Although I was certainly well mixed in with them that day I came off clear.

The Opetik venture came to little. It was late when we arrived, and too dark for pictures, save one of two boys who came and asked to be taken together; one was Nah-páy-o, of whom I was to see something in coming years. Nor was the matter of darkness the worst, for John had been the bearer of a hint to William from the post, and he refused point blank to go inland.

The up-river tide would not serve until two in the morning, but the Indians carried their things some way across a neck to their embarking place, built fires, cooked and waited. I was left alone near the house for a time, the family having

gone over with the Indians. A dozen large dogs were going about together. They had been restive and excited about the Indians, having indeed laid hold of a boy. Fortunately the family were there and clubbed them off. Now I was walking about, thinking what to do and oblivious of all dogs. I had had no trouble that year with the many I had been among; but I smelt as Indian, doubtless, after late associations, as the real thing, and ought to have realized the danger of it.

All at once I was conscious of being surrounded by the whole group of dogs, tails up and moving along with me, their noses and closed teeth rubbing against my elbows with suppressed growls; only a snap from one and the whole pack would have me down and in pieces. It was a bad situation. For an instant rose the mist of panic. In a matter of seconds my eyes rolled to a stick not far away which I could reach without stooping. It would not do to move suddenly, and I strolled as before. Once I clutched the stick, and swung it high, the dogs scattered. Sticks are swung to kill on that coast.

I went over to the Indians, singled out Katshi-uas, and told him I wanted to see a little of the country and would give him my canoe if he would help me to keep along with them one, two, or three days, and would give me in return some old canoe — “íbishash ush, tshiash ush” — “a small canoe, worn canoe,” and I would come back by myself, “nil peiku,”\* — “myself alone.” He was interested, got out quite a good canvas canoe, and offered it to me. “Miam!” — “Good!” I said, but he would have to help bring my stuff over the neck, and I was old and not very strong, and would have to have help on the march; some one would

\*Pay-eéku.

have to go in my canoe. He called some of the young men from their blankets — it was then midnight — and they talked together; then the young fellows flatly refused to take me on. It was not strange, they were heavily loaded and I would have been only a bother on my own showing. They were three to a canoe, and as to trying to keep up with them unaided, besides portaging an outfit and a ninety-pound canoe, and over the hard route George and I had taken — as well pursue the birds.

I sought William's floor the rest of the night, not without mosquitoes. At three or so came a loud knocking at the door, and in strode Ashimaganish, the chief, demanding from dazed William a piece of pork which he assumed had been looted from one of his men. He was very rough. It really seemed as if we would have to produce it quick, or be tomahawked, but it could not be found. William's protestations of innocence were received with the very worst grace by A., but he went off leaving us alive.

When I went to the beach in the morning there was the pork in my canoe! In the unloading one of the house people had naturally taken it for mine and put it where it belonged. As I remember, I made some arrangement with W. to explain next time the Indians came down, but I could not be very sorry that A. had not found it where it was.

Next day William and I talked a long time. He was hazy and unresponsive when I tried to discuss the Side Brook country and the ground I had overlooked beyond. I could not make him out. In the end I lost patience and put on the screws: "You know well enough how the brook winds above the rapids, you *must* know that

fine lake on the head, and the fall with the sharp turn to the north where the river slides down the high rock!" Now at last his face lighted, "*You have been there, after all, you have been there.*" The trouble had been that the Opetik people thought I merely followed George back, and did not go over to Side Brook at all.

Although it was useless to try to keep up with the Indians alone, they would be two days, with their heavy loads, in getting to the Assiwaban; and by going by sea I might cut in ahead of them, for they reach the Assiwaban close to tide water. With everything my way it could be done in a day, a long one, and impelled by a dream of getting pictures of the Indians while they were traveling, I started. But four hours of savage pulling against a strong head gale left me short of the Big Rattle, and though things improved then, I went tired and left off at five o'clock, camping behind high Tuh-púngiuk Rock just inside the fine bay of that name.

The wide, easy slopes and dignified escarpments west of the bay are grateful to the eye after the rugged rock heights of the outer waters. Eastward, and near, are the little Un'sekat islands where I met old Abel and his women in July. From Tuh-pungiuk, which is seven hundred feet high, appeared some people, evidently Eskimo, tending a net in the sweeping sand crescent which runs out to the three islands. Not caring to disturb the peace of the Un'sekat mind again by showing myself just at night, I kept out of sight. My climb up the hill had been mainly with an eye to an Arctic hare for supper, but there were only signs, and I had to come down, in more than one sense of the word, to bacon. It was my last night on the moss that year, and my last camp alone.

The morning of the 7th there were tails of sea fog to the hilltops and a moderate northeaster began to drive in, cold and gloomy, with misty rain. I started on, but it took an hour's hard work and tossing to reach the first little island, hardly a mile away. It was clear that I could not get around and up the Assiwaban that day, that my Indianizing for the year was done. William had said that the "overfall" just below where the Indians would take the river was ten miles above Side Brook. It was really only a mile or so, but even at that the distance was at least thirty miles from my camp, Tuh-pungiuk, and the day was one to be under cover.

At low tide the three little Un'sekat islands are united, and I was able to walk the mile to the Noahs'. They were not afraid now, they had heard about me from the post, and asked me this time to dinner, with a welcome. Aboriginal hands are small and shapely. The little house was, I judged, eleven by thirteen, pretty snug for the eight of us. But it was clean; Antone's wife, who it appeared was a sister of William and David Edmunds, had lived at the post at some time long ago and had not forgotten its ways. There was soap and a wash-tub and board — these outdoors, as was the cooking fire; the smell of the cooking was kept out of the little house. The fire inside was only for warmth, save in downright rain. Mrs. Antone had taken hold in the family and kept them up. And they were all kind, even as being Eskimo. Dripping as I was, in oilcoat shining from the drive of the icy sea, outdone by the elements, the warmth and welcome went to my heart. Mine was the best seat by the fire, the valeting by kindly hands, the dry, hot woollens brought out, the best of the

trout from the pan. The sound of the axe, the going on of the kettle, the intent picking out of the best trout — these are memories that return.

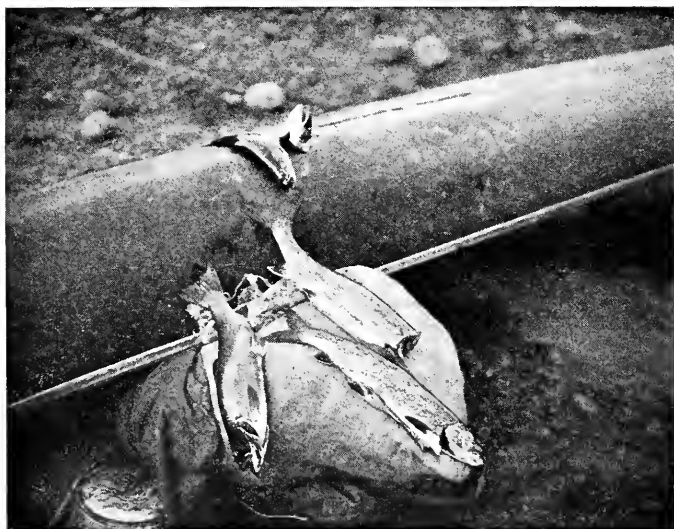
Toward night I gathered myself to go back to my outfit, meaning to sleep under the canoe. The house was small, nor did I know whether it would do to take up with the family in such limited quarters, if indeed they cared to have me. They protested; it did not look right, Mrs. Antone said, for a person to go off alone that way in a cold storm, to sleep without fire — why not stay with them and be comfortable. It came to the point of injury to their feelings. I hesitated, and yielded; there was only to go over to the canoe for a blanket. Now appeared some sort of doubt, perhaps in part curiosity. They were still in uncertainties of some sort. Then, as ever during the days I was there, I was not permitted to go out of sight alone; this time it was the stout six-year boy who went along; towed most helpfully over the hard places by a cord tied to the neck of a stout young dog. I was glad to have them along. There were some flocks of wonderfully tame ducks in sheltered nooks by the way, ruddies I thought, and some eiders and gulls, the latter nearly silent now that the nesting-time was over.

Once back at the house, with a few supplies, I became fairly one of the family. During the evening old Mrs. Noah turned and dried my skin boots, working them into pliability with the little gouge-like tool they all have, and stretching and pulling them into shape. She chewed well the hard places with short experienced teeth, sparing no pains, until the boots were as they had never been before. In the morning they were alongside my bed as fit as Sunday gloves. I was

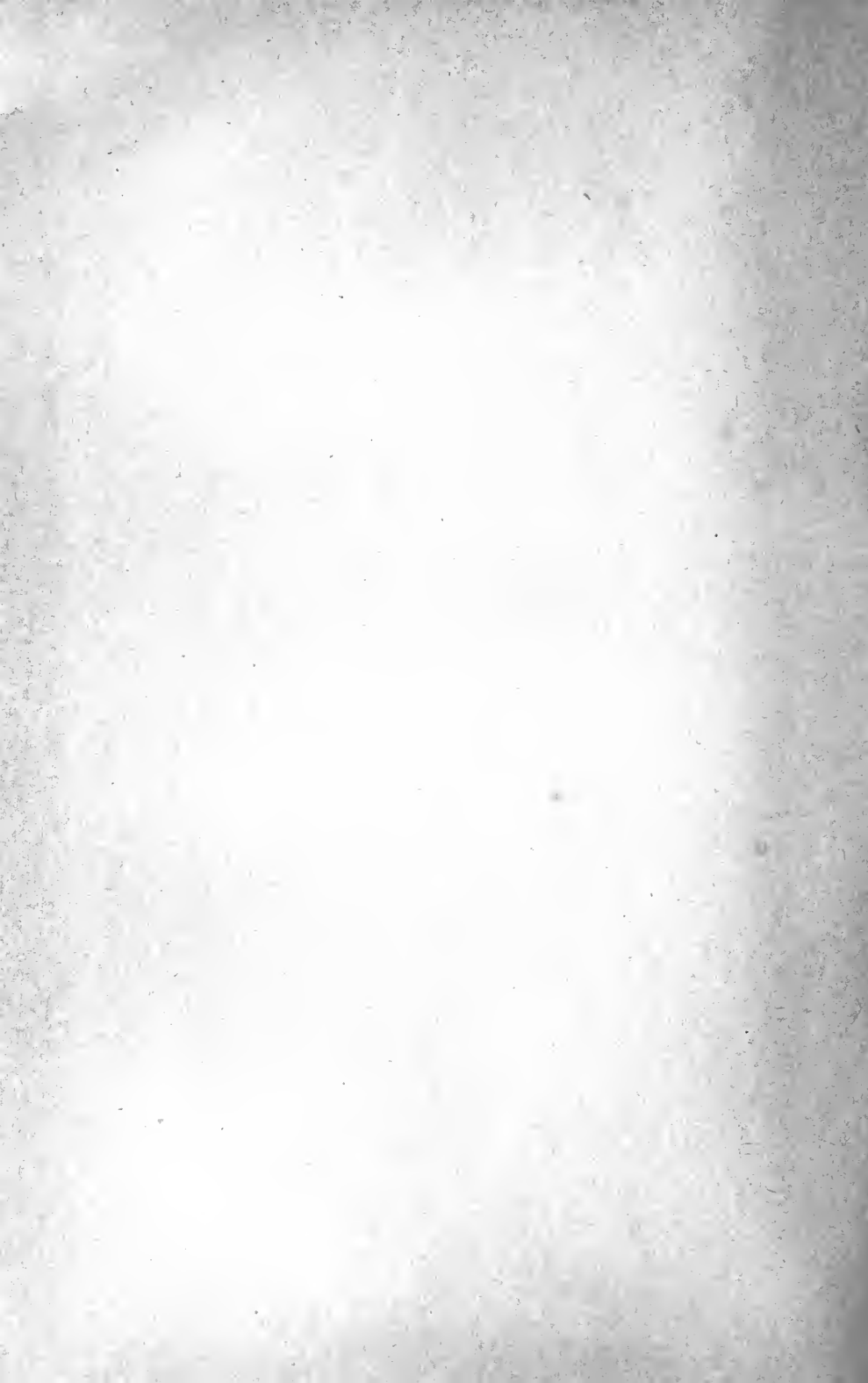




SEA TROUT AT UN'SEKAT (Page 73)



SQUARETAIL AND LAKE TROUT, ASSIWABAN RIVER 1906, (Page 228)



mended and tended. Never too many are these women's hands by the way—one never forgets.

After I had been undressed and put to bed, they fetched a long piece of cloth, like bunting, and curtained it around me, sleeping-car fashion. There was some rustling afterward, but I never knew how they stowed themselves, and when I turned out in the morning they were about the house as usual. I had a rare sleep. It was too cold for mosquitoes.

It is the usual thing hereabouts to have the summer house on some such rock as Un'sekat, where all breezes help against mosquitoes. The half-white people of the bays are more apt to cling to their winter houses, enduring and complaining, their poor dogs making warm nights hideous in their sleepless torture. A dog begins to wail his misery, another takes it up, and presently all are in full cry together. It is well to camp away from dogs, which draw flies, if possible on some little rock island. Then, if one have netting and be a good sleeper, something can be done.

The Noahs' interest in me, partly as a new specimen in natural history, and more as to what I was going about in this way for, never quite subsided. Their original uneasiness came a good deal from experiences of the coast in the past with two or three other strangers who had passed along. One, if I remember, was insane; another, with a past, had committed suicide on being identified at some far north station. As to this sort of thing they became tolerably reassured, but of course no one would come away from the world and go about this way who hadn't something on his mind. Mrs. A., on a hazard, was explicitly sympathetic

as to my past. There may have been a special reason for wishing to know the worst; I might be looking for a place to settle; such things had happened, and the young lady of the family was eligible. But they ought to know something about me. One cannot be too careful in these things. It had not helped matters that I passed up intentionally through the Big Rattle, though it was as smooth as oil at the time. "You-are-a-doire-defl!" said Mrs. A., in the queer speech she had before her English became limbered up. Still, not to abandon her sex, she did not wholly disapprove my supposed recklessness, and remained always sympathetic.

The second day the women went to the net behind the island and I was left alone in the house. After a time I looked out, and to my surprise saw four men, Eskimo, with old Abel superintending, laying out a net on the beach-grass a few yards away. How they got there so quietly I could not imagine. Could a boatload of people land without my knowing it, without hearing all the sharp-cut Eskimo talk of such occasions? It seemed strange, if not uncanny. I looked harder, and saw that it was simply the women of the family, who had dropped off their skirts and were doing their work in the usual men's trousers they wore underneath. Their new cut was much more appropriate and fit. The young lady of the house, slim and straight, with high-bred shoulders, looked particularly well in her handsome seal-skins. Certainly skirts are the last thing for an active fisherwoman.

Complete enough seemed the life for the time. There was no comfort to be added that was of consequence; the warm hearth, the good fare

of the sea, the kindly thought of the people, were enough for the day.

Time comes when almost any refuge, and this was more than a refuge, goes far with one; and the chancing upon people of a new race in their home happens not too often. The alternative with me was weathering out a long wet northeaster, at near freezing, off alone.

We lived well. A nine-pound salmon came in, and there were always fine large trout. Some one would run down the rocks, bring back a kettle of clear sea water, and in this the trout would be boiled; there was no salt but that of the sea water. At first fish done this way tasted flat to me, with a trace of bitter, but after a little I preferred them that way. We were certainly doing well. "Eat! Eat plentee! There is plentee!" old Abel would say, as I paused over the fish. One day he took a hammer and asked me to go along with him, across the little island. He led the way to a boulder of lightish trap, much like others about in appearance, but unlike them it rang when he struck it. He thought there must be something unusual in it, perhaps gold, to be so different from the dull-sounding stones about. I had the ungrateful task of explaining that there was no gold in it, that it was no more valuable than the other stones. One would not expect him to notice that the boulder rang. Eskimo have remarkable powers of observation in physical matters, not to say of analysis. The well-known block-and-tackle purchase with which they haul out walrus and other heavy water game shows this; and even though they may have taken the idea from whalers, their clever adaptation of it, at least, places them very high in mechanical conception. They have un-

usual skull capacity. I think it is Deniker, among the ethnologists, who states that a certain string of fifteen Eskimo skulls had greater average capacity than any similar string of any other race.

For a day or two the little air of uncertainty about me did not change; the family were still at a loss to place me. Then, apparently, they came into new light, and the way of it was hardly to be expected. It was a matter, we will say, of botany. The flowers of the bleak, exposed place were almost as interesting as at Fanny's earlier, though they were now of the less engaging types of early fall. I happened to gather a few and took them into the house to be named. Mrs. Antone fell to and we had a session over them. Some of the family scattered out and brought others; at last, as a sure climax, a dandelion! I really ought to have withheld my having seen one before. With this flower episode their minds considerably cleared. They could understand this; a person who was interested in flowers could not be very bad.

About the islands the cotton-flower grows to a fine size, with its great white boll. It is "Mitten flower" here, Waw-lú-yuk. I asked if their people used to wear mittens of white bear cubs' fur,— "Yes, how did you know?" The alder is "Green-flower," Ohíwi-uk. They do not eat the dandelion; its name is Wis-úk-tuk, meaning, as I remember, "Yellow flower." The mushroom or toadstool is "Devilflower."

Antone had a fast, deep sailboat, and was generally prosperous that year. He had sold a silver fox for \$100, twelve white foxes and six reds, and besides had shot more than one hundred deer, mostly near by. "He was cracking at them every day," said old Abel. They needed that

many deer, between family and dogs. When deer did not come to the shore A. had to go out to the open water for seals, and evidently did not much fancy this ice-edge alternative. The ice shifts out and in, and there is always a chance of being carried out to sea. The only birds at the ice edge are sea pigeons, white in winter. Antone looked me over when I spoke of liking to have a winter on the coast, and said, "You couldn't stand it."

From my diary: "Caplin's eggs line the long beaches, sometimes three inches deep. Sand color or paler. The people dry caplin on the rocks whole for winter dog food. The ghost of a smelt in appearance, it is the rabbit of the water, on which everything else feeds.

"There are eleven dogs altogether, five or six being puppies. So far from being without feeling for their masters, they are sociable and good companions. Like most dogs kept in numbers they are not quite so responsive as ours, but knock about the place in a stout, self-reliant way, hairing up readily at each other, but behaving pretty well at that. They are easily started off into a pandemonium of howling. I have not heard them bark yet, though they do, I am told, under some circumstances. Immemorial use at the sleds has given them a peculiar bracing set behind, as if all ready to pull. All here are fat, living principally on coarse fish caught in the trout nets, sculpin, rock cod, and flounders, besides the waste from the trout, and by beach-combing about the shores on their own account." Curiously, they like the sculpins best of all, and not only they, but some people think very well of them.

The dogs look singularly well, happy, and at

home when living with Eskimo in this way, as in their glory; those I have seen in the bays have not looked as well off, and those of the mission villages and posts almost always seem inferior.

Antone agreed to sail me to Fanny's when the weather improved, as it did in three or four days. The distance, some sixty miles, was too much for me to take on by canoe without large allowance for delays. I have never undertaken long distances on the coast by canoe very willingly, either by day or night, the conditions are too uncertain. One year two young men of the shore, rather venturesome ones at that, were three weeks with a good sailboat going from Hopedale to Nain and back, although in winter the distance one way has been made in a single day with dogs.

The day came at last. I was not glad to leave. People of wilderness places always stand at the shore as you go; and the women wave as you make the offing.

It was only the Little Rattle this time. The current was strong and the place narrow. There was wind, but fast as the boat was she could not beat through. When we came about, the current took us back too far. Again and again Antone tried, then lay in the eddy until the tide slacked and we could pass the bar. Now Antone showed his quality and his craft hers. He would let me touch nothing, tiller nor sheet nor spar; I might have been a child. When I became cold he invited me to get into his fine seal sleeping bag, with its white blanket lining. I looked ruefully at my skin boots, wet and not too clean. "It can be washed," he said, shortly, and I slid in. The sheets, beautifully cut lines of some large seal, greased, small but unbreakable, all ran to cleats



within Antone's reach as he sat at the tiller. With flying hands, the tiller let go, he would cast off and cleat the lines when we came about, as a master plays his keys; like a demon he would bound forward to hold some fluttering sail for an instant to the swing of the wind, and we never missed the turn. The waters he knew. At full speed, the boat lying over, he would dash for the rock shore until I quivered, then short about and off for some far point, where, as we swung by, terrorized eiders tore from under the lee and sea pigeons shot from below water into the air as if fired from guns. Recovered, the pigeons would swing afar and come close over again, peering down at us curiously, all black below, and their bright red feet steering behind.

Later the wind eased. We passed Jim Lane's, two miles away, across the wide passage; he spoke regretfully of it when I saw him next, two years later, but we had feared losing the wind, and it was a long way to Fanny's. Jim is the best of the best! It calmed off finally. Somewhere about Shung-ho we met the Eskimo John and his wife, who were "going up to help Antone"; to help Antone do what is not important; I think it was to get out some "wood," timber we should call it, for a house. It would have been as well, as things went next day, if we had not met them. Not to invest useful John, good shot and good hunter, still less his ample wife, with the dignity of an evil genius, it would have been as well, just as it would have been if he had not reached Opetik sooner than I did the week before and kept William from going inland with me. We all landed on a large boulder with deep water around to boil a kettle and have tea. In landing J. sailed his boat

square into my canoe—it was tailing behind our boat and made no apology. I was cold and cross, and snapped at him for doing it. He was impudent, I responded, and he in turn, and in the end threatened me. I couldn't "come into their country and growl this way." We were all on the boulder together. Antone was evidently a well-knit friend of Mrs. J., and began to look black as things came to a climax. No one likes to be held to the mark in the presence of his women folk, and Antone's position was not much easier than J.'s. It wouldn't do to recede, so I pulled off my gloves, slapped them down on the rock one by one, stood clear and waited. They were not boxers, the first one would go overboard. But Eskimo do not know when to stop, and, woman and all, the situation might become mixed. But nothing ever quite happens, *not under the Union Jack*, nor did then.

We ate silently and parted. Some way along Antone tied up, and we slept uncomfortably in the boat, with flies. We were at Daniel's in the morning, where a kutshituk was again hopping about over the dogs. The wind rose strongly from south of east, and we made the post early. Antone had talked of getting some one to go to the cape with us, as he did not know the waters well. He needed some one, fairly, but there was no one to go, and in the end he gave out. The foot of the run was white, and he did not like to go into strange waters in such weather; moreover Mr. and Mrs. John were at Un'sekat waiting for him. The fine diplomatic hand of John, after our tiff, may have been concerned in the matter.

I explained how ill it left me for the mailboat, and that I should have gone to Nain if he had



JIM LANE



A BEAR, BEAR POND, 1905



not said he would take me to Spracklin's, but he did not waver. Before long he walked off for his boat, the wind being fair, without asking for his pay. "Where are you going?" I put in, "Home." "Come back, I haven't paid you." He came, surprised, and I handed him five dollars, the first he had ever had, no doubt. He did not fall into the sea in his astonishment, but looked near it. For some time he hung about, trying to do things for me, and finally left with a good deal of light in his face, which has never failed in the years since whenever we have met. I doubt if the Un'sekat people had any thought of my paying them, certainly not for taking care of me. As to boating me away from their place, it obviously had to be done, unless I was going to stay, and that was all there was about it. That I had worldly possessions to speak of, there or anywhere, did not enter their minds, I think.

So it is in their world; the wanderer must have what he requires, shelter and food and help on his way if he needs it — these at least and of course.

I asked the post people to put me across the big bay with their large boat, pointing out that it was no weather for canoeing, and offering to pay almost anything. But they refused; they were too busy. Cotter, however, was going down himself on the second day after and would take me along; he would get there first anyway. (This I did not forget later.) But I was not willing to take chances on the steamer this time, and though I stayed over night at the post, which could not well be helped, I waited no longer.

Here my diary becomes rather unjust and certainly spiteful toward some pretty good people along the shore. I was a good deal exercised.

The entry concludes, helplessly, "Well, here I am, wind bound, the look of rain in the clouds and a steamer to catch!"

When I got off in the morning it looked impossible to go beyond the foot of the run. The tide was going out strong, a swell coming in from the open, and a sharp white sea from the cape east. It made a jumping lop, striking at everything. All I had in mind was to drop down that far, camp, and be on the spot whenever it would do to go on; at least I was now fresh to row. Sometimes, however, things are better than they look. Inching gradually into the bad-looking mess at the foot of the run I found that the canoe was not taking the least water, and held on for some time. But the irregular motion, the pitching and sudden jumps of the light canoe in the tide rips were so wearing that I gave up. There was no danger, and not much to do but balance and be thrown about, but the motion was too exhausting. Along the mainland was a line of "barricados," as often happens, boulders shoved up by the ice. They call them belly-carders here, in good faith. Behind them was a sand flat just awash, so that after passing between the boulders it was possible to walk along dry shod in skin boots and drag the canoe. It was easy going after the bobble of the run. Flowers' Bay, next, was out of the current, though lively, and by one o'clock I was across and boiling a kettle on the southern point. The swell was mostly cut off here by Massacre Island outside. Six hours more and I was across Lane's Bay.

From the north side of the bay I had seen what looked to be some trap boats with masts a mile above the south point, but after two hours' rowing

they turned out to be large schooners. I tried to talk with a skipper, and would not have minded a passing chat by the stove and a cup of tea, but he had all the shadowed reticence, and in that case, disagreeableness, of the skipper "on fish," afraid the word will be passed along and bring in other schooners; and I pulled away hoping never to see him or his again. Heavens! His countenance, save perhaps for the beard, few would care to have!

An ill-natured extra mile against the tide and at right angles to my proper course, to Black Point, and the last stretch to the cape harbor opened up. It was slow work, all day. The canoe, wonderful as she was at keeping on top, at taking care of one whatever came, was apt to pound when against a short sea, and spattered up spray which rained down inboard. She had to be eased over the top of every wave. In the hour after lunch I may have made a half mile; the wind was strongest then, and the sea, though coming off the cape island and not high, was well whitened. It was not the pulling, but the incessant pitch and throw of the corky craft that told with the hours. Sitting in the middle leaves the boat wonderfully free to rise, balance, and elude what comes, but one's waist, which has to be the universal joint of all gyrations, gets hard wear. In flat water one could row forever.

I have never seen a white man's canoe that would drive fast into a steep sea and keep dry. The lines of the sea creatures are not in them. The Indian's sea canoes are another matter. *They* can be driven.

Once under the White Point, where the fog shut in on my night trip down, the water became level. At ten I was on the sand beach at the end

of the cape harbor, after thirteen hours of actual rowing. It was unusually dark. My back was numb, and as I stepped about looking for white and visible bits of firewood, without much directing power, it was as if on stilts, and it was no joke getting down to pick up a piece of wood when I found it. After awhile I got together enough to do with and what followed was worth while. It was a time to let out, and I cooked and cooked and smoked to the limit, content. It was good travel, it was good to make port. At such times one asks no odds of the world.

After midnight I took a pack over the portage, meaning to continue around the harbor a mile and a half more, but the sloping rocks with water below would not do, dark as it was. I could not see my feet or footing much, and was unsteady in getting about, for the stilts continued. I was not too sure even of getting the canoe over the portage. By the time I was back for her, however, circulation was on again, and the stilts became legs. The tide was out, and gave me a nasty slow time getting out over the mud and again to the land on the other side. One wants an easy bit after eighteen hours on the road, and slipping around as if on banana skins at two in the morning with a canoe on is not sport. It seemed as if half the width of the harbor was only awash. After all, the canoe picked up lightly enough for the last lift above tide mark.

Spracklin did not wake when I lighted a match over him and spoke, and knowing his desperate pace and short hours of sleep I turned away from his raised arms, bandaged for his many "pups," and pulling off my wet boots fell upon the narrow, one-sided old lounge and banked myself up against



the back. Almost like the shutting of a steel trap I went dead to the world. The house had felt warm, coming from outside, but I ought to have covered myself. Damp from salt water and perspiration, in an hour I woke up chattering, pulled out my sleeping bag and got in, and there Spracklin found my mortal semblance in the morning.

The rest was not much more than getting home. For a day I sat about, ate a deal of fish, and slept. The second morning I was putting the canoe in to go jigging cod, when the stones rattled, and along the beach came Cotter, with young Jerry Oliver, bearing a box. They had been becalmed, nighted chilly on a barren rock without blanket or fire, and looked as if they had had enough of it. Then came my revenge; easily Cotter had said that he would get there first. We had some good talks the next days, and many in years following.

It was Tuesday, the 11th, that I rowed down from the inlet; it was to be Monday, the 17th, before the mailboat came. Fish were still scarce; I have a note of six hundred quintals for each side. The nets had been out of water in some of the best fishing. Tom Poole, the foreman, and another of the crew rowed to an island far outside and jigged a boatload of large fish, jigging right and left, four lines to two men. They slat them off the hook over a crosspiece in front of the fisher; there is no time for fussing.

From my diary: "August 15. A clear, warm day, all rocks and air and sunshine, a sea blue and sparkling, and a fine line of bergs passing south. Tall ice is never wanting on the eastern sky line; it gives the keynote to this barren rock region, its real latitude.

"Some snow is left, always in the most sunny

hollows under the ridges, where the northwest winds pile the deepest drifts. There is no level snow in winter, all is gathered behind something. The stream across from the stage is dried up, as I found on going over to fish. New flowers have come, not many. Redberries are eatable now, though in blossom a month ago; the forcing effect of the long sunshine is remarkable. Young birds are about, sandpipers and the like, and land sparrows. Snow buntings will be here soon, everywhere. The gulls are nearly silent, the ravens still more so, but hold on in the ledges across the harbor. In the clear water off the landing stage rock-cod and sculpins work about the fishheads thrown over. Spracklin says there are clams here, which the "Eskimaws" eat.

"I jigged cod at times, by an island near, in two or three fathoms' depth. A dozen fish would hang just over the jig in a close circle, heads in, making passes for it, and generally getting the hook under the broad jaw. The jig is sawed up and down fifteen or eighteen inches just over the kelp. In three or four easy jerks I would have a fish, and was sometimes well loaded down in a couple of hours. In the boat they yield a little like water with the motion of rowing, especially in a swell, and are a peculiarly dead load for a canoe. In a steep sea they might easily slide to one end and make trouble; compartments are the thing, to keep them distributed.

"The jig is a cruel thing; many fish get away badly torn. The waste is great. Moreover, if we must kill, let us kill mercifully, at least as mercifully as do most savages. The jigger, the steel trap, and the shotgun as commonly used, are maimers and torturers.

When a fish is hurt he hurries away for the "doctor," a beetlish bug which fastens to the wound until it heals. This doctor and his mission are told of seriously on all the fishing coast. There is no questioning the doctor's existence and activity, though the motives for his attentions may well be suspected.

"We have been eating cods' livers, tasting like concentrated *paté de fois gras*. They are rather too rich; if one eats many at a time the world is all cod liver that day. Subdued by parboiling they come in well. Technically they are "blubber," as all grease-bearing things are. The universal blubber cask of the coast is strongly in evidence to all senses, including, when fermentation is going on, that of hearing.

"Sunday, 16th. No mailboat yet, though all felt that she would come. . . . Bruise for breakfast — good. S. and Tom Poole treating their 'pups,' which come of the slime and wrist-work. They are bad to see.

"It is half a jail matter, this waiting without being safe in going out of sight at all. In clear weather it is not so bad — one can go up on the hill and look for the steamer. In foggy weather it is wretched. No reading matter left.

"Spracklin looks rested since the fishing slackened. He tells of the exact ways of the Hudson's Bay Company people. Their carefulness goes into post details; a former agent at the Inlet cut some timber himself, sawed the boards, and enlarged the dining-room. When the chief came along he had him pull it all down because it had not been reported.

"Skipper Jim is not so afraid that I will fall to pieces now, remarking when Cotter was here

and we were sitting about with one or two visiting skippers. 'Do you know what I said to myself about you the morning you came up on the stage? I said to myself, 'Has that man come up here to die?' Then C. put in, in a tone of cheerful support, 'Well, I didn't see him then, but I saw him when he got to my landing!'

"It is a good vitalizing climate. The Newfoundlanders say, when worse for the winter, 'Oh, well, I'll be all right when I get to the Labrador.' There is less fog than in Newfoundland, less housing with others who are sick, the light summer buildings are more sanitary. And fish-smells, however fierce, seem harmless."

They can be trying nevertheless. The night before the mailboat came it was nearly calm, with an air from the great refuse pile under the stage straight to my window. It kept me awake. But for fear of another night of it I should have waited for the boat to come back from Nain, where it turned out she was going. However, the chance to see the place was worth taking. As we passed north outside the islands, familiar landmarks appeared far away along the mainland. Tuh-pungiuk was the plainest of them, a dozen miles away. There still, doubtless, were the Noahs, tending their nets.

Further south there was much talk of Hubbard, and some anxiety. He had gone light, and his prospects of success were doubtful, especially as it was thought he had no gill net, but I did not expect the tragedy that occurred.

Towards the straits Norman Duncan came on with Briggs, his publisher's manager. Other Americans came on along, Hewitt, of Boston, climbing up the side with peculiar good will



A FINBACK, HAWK HARBOR



THE BEGINNING OF THE PACK, CAPE HARRIGAN, 1905



after having had two or three weeks' waiting on short provisions. At Twillingate, one of the best of the fishing towns, Duncan and Briggs and I spent a day or two of beautiful sunny weather, the very first of the summer there. Fog had prevailed every day until then. Fancy the women ghosting about all summer in the fog, the men gone "down to the Labrador!" Duncan stayed off at Exploits with his friends, the Manuels. Briggs and I took the *Clyde* to Lewisport, and went on by rail, parting at Boston. My summer reconnoissance, planned by the printed timetables for three weeks if I did not stop off at Fanny's, five if I did, had lasted just seventy days.

## Chapter VI

1904

IN 1904 Robert Walcott and I left Boston by rail, July 18, without much intention beyond that of trying the Assiwaban River, perhaps staying inland over two steamer trips, nominally a month. The planning was merely a telephone matter — we were talking, found that both felt like going somewhere, and were off in a day or two without many words. I happened to know about sailing dates, also that there was a canoe to be had in St. John's. We bought the canoe by telegraph, and it was waiting us on board the *Virginia Lake* when we boarded her at Battle Harbor. It looked large, on the deckhouse, and when we walked over and lifted it our misgivings became fixed. She weighed one hundred and forty-one pounds, dry and light; although a canoe in shape and canvas skin, she only wanted rowing gear to be a good, stout rowboat. She was a good piece of work, her maker being that rare mechanic Gerrish of Maine, from whose camp on B Pond, years before, I had climbed an eastern hill and seen for the first time the grand southwestern rampart of Katahdin.

Our doing much portaging with such a craft was out of the question. Still I remembered the blue Assiwaban stretching thirty miles inland without heavy rapids; we could go that far, surely. Our trip from Boston to Nain was a record one, nine days to an hour, allowing for change of longitude. We might have saved something like a day on that, if the captain of the *Home*, from Bay



of Islands through the Gulf to Battle Harbor, had not held back unnecessarily, for the *Virginia Lake* had waited for us nearly or quite twenty-four hours as it was — for us two only, and on a perfect day such as really counts for two days on that foggy, uncertain coast. The feelings of Captain Parsons, as the hours went by, may be imagined, not to mention those of the discouraged passengers. Knowing the way of things there I felt as if we had murdered a steamer voyage, and hastily went below until we were off and in another air.

Peter McKenzie, the Hudson's Bay Company manager, was on, and of all others to meet there, Stuart Cotter. He had made a new contract with the company, and was taking charge at Northwest River, but although all the Davis Inlet coast had believed that he would make the very most of his trip across the water he was still a bachelor.

We were some time at Rigolet, and there the Hudson's Bay Company people got off. Captain Gray and the *Pelican* were waiting for them, and at a kind hint from Peter we were asked to go north by their ship. Chances looked better with the mailboat, and we did not change. It turned out better so, decidedly, for the *Pelican* took bottom in getting out of Cartwright, and it was many a day before she saw Davis Inlet again.

McKenzie had nine wooden canoes, Peterboros, sixteen feet by thirty-eight inches by sixteen inches, strong and serviceable boats. He asked me what I thought of them, but did not say what I came to know afterward, that some or all of them were presents for his old Naskapi friends at Chimo. In all the North he was then known to the Indians as "Our Father McKenzie," and he

deserved the title. During his twelve or fourteen years at Chimo he had saved them from starvation more than once by organizing their deer hunts. It is probable that no one else has ever had their confidence and affection as he did. He was part Indian himself, and the blood told, with whatever allowance for his remarkable personality.

The Spracklins were not doing much as to fish. We had but a short visit, merely while the mail was being made up. Ellen was still the mainstay. The old place and people looked home to me, indeed. The little sunny sitting-room with the stove and the corner cupboard, the chairs and old lounge on which in conjunction we used to cobble up the lance net for my bed, were there unchanged. The room was always good to be in. Things had to be fairly near each other from necessity, but Spracklin was one of the few men who have a touch in living-rooms. One would as soon think of rearranging the fins on one of his cod as anything he had set about. I was there many a day before I saw how right the little place was. Men of the sea more than others, perhaps, can be shipshape without falling into the geometrically unpleasant.

The place about, too, was always shipshape, in order. Spracklin was always painting things, boats and gear and buildings, down to the full round bull's-eyes accurately done in white on every door about the station. These helped one tell the door in the night, maybe, but Spracklin did it to label his entrances, his flat doors; it pleased his eye.

We were at Nain at ten in the morning, and away southward by one. The feature of the voyage to Voisey's, some twenty-five miles, was

the Eskimo boy, a waif about the mission, who went along to try to find the way. He had been over it only once, some time before. The navigation itself was on calm water and uninteresting; our craft was slow on water and a crusher on land. The boy paddled softly, he had never done it before and his arms ached. He took our nagging as imperturbably as an old farm horse. We had to have what help he could give, for the passages were wide, the shores high, and old saws about getting over your large waters while it is calm were all to the point. How the wind can blow in those long passages that stretch off below Nain! They are noble passages to see.

I had said much to W. about grampuses, especially about *the* grampus of Un'sekat, and when a very large one crossed our wake rather near, and snorted prodigiously, he certainly looked around. I think I had given him the impression that almost all grampuses came up under one's canoe.

Where we lunched, some six miles down, below "the rattle," the boy wandered, unnoticed, and found some ptarmigan, but our flying shot went wide. The sharpness of these young Eskimo in finding and seeing game of all sorts is remarkable. I have often thought they were quicker sighted than even the Indians. They are more highly energized, and they seem as absolutely fitted to the coast life as the seals themselves. The Indian is a little too far north here, being at his northern limit and probably beyond his natural latitudes. The extraordinary diversity of Indian and Eskimo both in genius and physical habit indicates a good deal of separation during their elder race history.

The young eiders and sea pigeons were flying well by this date, and we shot quite a few as they flew by. It seemed as if no ducks were ever better than these eiders when they came out of the kettle next morning.

The boy did visible thinking toward night, as we approached the Voisey's Bay waters. A deepish bay to the right bothered him in the twilight, and we spent a little time looking it over, finally camping just inside it on good moss. We were on Kikertavák, "Big Island," and some twenty miles from Nain. On the sea chart is shown a through passage west of this island, but according to the bay people it has no existence. Six miles south of Nain the inside passage, the one we were in, takes a turn west for a mile or more, then turns sharply to the southeast around a noticeable crested mountain, visible from far about.

The morning of the 28th, as we were at the eiders, the boy came in from one of his little disappearances, whispering excitedly, "Deers!" Following him some way we came to a caribou, which Wolcott shot handily. It was our first large meat, and a good omen for the future. In no time to speak of the boy skinned the animal and cut it up.

We were at John Voisey's at midday. His wife, one of the Lanes, had formerly worked at Spracklin's. John told of seeing me go by last year, and of painting his gable red. He wanted no more such slips. He had been up Assiwaban in winter, but turned out to be a good deal wrong as regards Indian camping places and their movements — the old story with the shore people. He went along with us in a flat to the fall, over six miles on the bay and four or five by river, to help

portage. The rocks along the river were slaty and on edge, cutting our moccasined feet; we had a time getting the heavy canoe along to a place where we could turn up the bank. It was a heavy matter to do with the boat on any terms in bad ground, and not much easier for three of us at once than for one alone to carry it. John was nearly all in by the time we had made the portage, some three quarters of a mile, though it was on level ground once we were up the hundred-foot bank. It was very hot on the sunny river bank at the far end, perhaps ninety degrees. The shore people simply wilt at such times, strong as many of them are; they are not hot-weather people. John was easily glad to start back for his cool sea place, where he could get away from the flies as well as the heat. We were ready to camp ourselves, and did so a mile up the river, at a bend where the Indian trail to Opetik was plainly marked on the trees. Here the stream, five or six hundred feet wide, is easy, winding in three or four long swings through a timbered sand plain with hills a mile away on each side. Some of the river banks are high and of sliding sand, the lower ones clothed with moss and alders, besides some black spruces, but what there are of these last, and they are rather scattering, grow mostly over the river plain. One can pass about freely almost anywhere, save for the damp alder places; and white *cladonia*, the caribou moss, carpets most of the level ground.

There are some few trout in all eddies below gravel points, but they are not always abundant, however, for some miles. Trout are the common fish of the river, often visible sculling along in the gravel shallows singly or in pairs, only a foot or two from shore, turning in now and then and

rubbing noses against the dry land, hunting the water line like deliberate spaniels. We saw rather few in the first fourteen miles. At five or six miles from the falls the sand plain ends and a strong water-worn ledge on the north side marks the entrance to the real river valley. This, for seventy miles, would be called a cañon in the West. The steep sides drop six hundred to eight hundred feet almost into the river for twenty-five miles above the falls, and from there the headlands are more or less sheer to a height of ten or twelve hundred feet. All the side streams save at the main forks discharge in ribbon falls, most of them emerging from very perfect examples of hanging valleys, and their white ribbons sometimes begin to show nearly a thousand feet above the river. These brooks do not amount to much in dry times, but in the great melting period of spring the valley walls of the upper river must be a lively sight, and the rush and roar tremendous. Even in summer, after long rainy periods, it is not too pleasant to be camped near some of the high brooks. Gusts of wind bring the sound from some high-up overfall in a startling way, carrying it off again in a few seconds almost to stillness. The sound is rasping in the pent-in river valley.

At the narrow falls near tide-water the river chokes back in very high water, and must be placid and lakelike there for a good many miles up. That year we left a caribou carcass on the upper beach at our first camp above the falls, and a year or two later I found the weathered skeleton unmoved, though it was on a point and especially exposed to whatever current was running.

On the afternoon of our first day's travel above the falls the swift gravel bars were almost too much



THE WIND LAKE OF THE ASSIWABAN, CABOT LAKE





for us to get over, save by wading with a tracking line. By camping time our lumbering boat had been spitefully christened "The Raft," and still bears the name in reminiscence. She has never been taken above the falls since that trip.

We camped at a slight point where spring ice had shoved up the river gravel. The river was swift here, and we looked for trout in the eddy below the point along the bank, where the water was still and had a little depth. While I was getting things going at the camp two or three rods back from the edge of the bank on a luxurious white moss level, Walcott took his grilse rod to the point for fish. After a while I looked out, but not much seemed to be doing, though W. looked all intent. It developed that there were "some heavy things in there"; he had lost some tackle on them. His gut was no doubt old and brittle, for grilse tackle will land almost anything if sound. The sun had been hot and the fish taking lightly. Shortly they showed a better spirit and the few necessary fish came in, the best toward three pounds' weight.

As darkness came on we were sitting by the fire when a heavy splash came from under the bank, and others followed. We listened, a little startled, then knew that it must be trout. All along the eddy they sounded, for a hundred yards. As my diary has it, "It sounded at times like a dozen muskrats on a rampage, and was really startling in the still evening." Such an appeal to one's fishing instincts I had never met with before.

"We went down and fished awhile, and though it was rarely possible to see the flies on the water for the darkness, the large fish found them well enough and came in fast. Three or four would

jump at the fly at once, and must have knocked each other about considerably. They were frantic. We could not use many, and as the mosquitoes were raging we retreated soon to our smoke at the tent. The splashing continued long and began again before daylight."

The "heavy things" that had done damage to W. were, I now think, *namaycush*, the great lake trout of the North, which may be of almost any size and in quick water is a hard puller. In deep water they bore around and around in circles and down. Their habitat reaches at least as far south as a New Hampshire pond a few miles from the Massachusetts line. In Maine they are "togue," in northern New Hampshire "lunge," in Quebec, "túladi," or gray trout; Indians know them as "kókomesesh" or "namáycush."

Caribou had walked many of the beaches, and wolves, though the number of individual animals concerned was small. An occasional fox also had run the shores, and a smallish bear or two.

A mile or so above our trout camp is the Nátua-áshish, "Little River-lake" of the Indians. It is less than a mile wide at the widest, and perhaps four long, with steep hills to the south. As no noticeable drainage comes in on that side, what water there is may go to Side Brook. Invariably, about the outlet, from one to four lesser shel-drakes start up, always rather wild.

We had learned to pole together by the second day, and could get ahead well in the swift places. Above the little lake, however, an east wind came up river behind and a cloth of forty-five square feet took us along well. After six or eight miles again came a widening, with portentous dark cliffs which continued for some miles. The lake did

not look as long as it really was, and though a sea was rising we kept on. Water began to come in, and there was no good place to land on the south side where we were. Still a good deal of the shore was only rock debris from the cliffs above and could be climbed, and we kept pretty close in. The pace soon became very fast, we thought twelve or fourteen miles an hour. It was a wonder that everything held, but the speed relieved the strain a little. A smooth canoe eighteen or twenty feet long can make a wonderful pace before the wind, and if fairly flat and balanced a little high in the bow will tend to slide itself up over the waves. For my part I was very dubious along by the cliff headlands; they did not look very high while ahead, nor far, but they were, and it seemed as if we could never reach and get by them. W. seemed steady; he was used to racing boats, and I relied on his showing some sign if things looked half as doubtful to him as they did to me. A year or two afterward he talked about it. He had been about as uncomfortable as I, but knew that I had seen a good deal of open canoes, and I looked easy. We finally cleared the narrows and the wind had a chance to spread. It was still a lively lake sea, but we reached a sand beach without swamping.

Knowing the place better, as the worst wind lake anywhere, I would not think of going into it again under such circumstances, though a west or northwest wind is probably more to be regarded there than one from east such as we had. The hills are shaped so as to collect wind from either way. Long, plough-shaped slopes swing around to the southwest side and concentrate everything from west to north against the high rock faces of

the narrows, and from them remarkable bolts of wind sometimes shoot downwards, striking irresistibly. When we came back through the lake we saw where a great ball of wind had come down on a timbered shelf on the north side of the narrows, knocking everything flat, then bounding over some standing trees to a lower shelf and apparently rolling down into the lake. It left the stripped white tree stems combed flat like grass to the water side. This may well have happened while we were passing, as we were too preoccupied on the other side of the narrows to observe it, and we remembered no recent wind as strong as the one that day. Two or three canoes of Indians were struck by a gust some years ago and all were drowned. Their people who travel there now naturally show a good deal of consciousness about the place. They know it as Nátua-áshu, a name which is generic for a river—lake or expansion.

We sounded the lake just above the narrows when going down river, finding it two hundred and seventy-five feet deep at about two hundred and fifty yards from shore. What depths would be found farther out is hard to say. I have always meant to take time there and find out, but the impulse to get through the place and be done with it has been too strong.

The ice must become very thick here, swept of snow as it is by the gales, and it doubtless stands immovable against the first spring breakup. Then, apparently, the lake backs up for two or three miles. Upon the first wide levels sand and driftwood are deposited, higher up the gravel, this getting coarser and coarser as the channel narrows. For two or three miles the stream flows very swift, silent, and shallow over pea gravel, which is al-

most as unstable as quicksand, and curiously bothersome to get over, whether one paddle, pole, or wade.

To the north, once past the lake, the country breaks back a little, with a slight valley, which for once is not quite a hanging valley. Here, in winter, the shore people of one shade or another, mostly dark enough, leave the river for the high level to hunt deer. Some say they know the river a little farther up, but if they do they have shocking memories for natural features. Even concerning the "Big Lake," the Nátua-áshu, their descriptions are often weak. There were "Indian poles all around it"—but we saw not one. It is the very last place to camp, save when windbound, or perhaps at the extreme lower end. The shore people's stories of it are hard to account for. Sam Bromfield's son Abram, one of the most presentable youths of the shore, asked me if what he had heard was true, that you could sail a trap boat all the way up into the Big Lake, and when you were there the shed hair of the seals was knee deep around the shores! Being a seal hunter he was much lighted up by the tale. Yet the seventy-five foot fall is at the very head of tide, and the bay people go there often. Under this fantastic imagination as to things inland is the demonology of the Eskimo, which places all sorts of evil spirits there.

From the narrows to the main forks is four or five miles. The Mistástin comes in from south at right angles, but in two or three miles recovers its course from nearly west. The main river valley, more and more walled in, carries on straight west for some thirty miles more. The forks camping place, a few hundred yards up the Mis-

tastin, is my favorite of all the region. There were many Indian poles, mostly winter ones. An ample white moss level, with sparse spruce and larch, extends south until cut off by the westward swing of the Mistastin, and over this plain caribou paths led like spokes of a wheel to our camping place at the forks. The few actual tracks were old. Successive fine terraces extend nearly from river to river a little west of the forks; on the southwest the level line of their last high escarpment against the sky, turning with a square corner up the Mistastin, is singularly fortification-like and imposing from points on the lower terraces. The dignity of the level line in landscape is rarely more evident than here. Back of the terraces is a sharp ascent to the rolling high level, here nearly a thousand feet above the river.

That first afternoon we went Mistastin way, for it had been fabled by John Voisey that the Indians used that stream. It turned out shallow, rapid, and unboatable, running over rough boulder gravel for many miles. From a valley with ponds to the south a large rushing branch comes in and above it the Mistastin is visibly smaller, though even at the forks it is less than the main Assiwaban. But its valley is one of the main features of the country; at some time a great drainage has come that way. From that side was laid down the broad river-plain and by these waters were cut the terraces.

On one of the higher terraces an Indian hunter, a year or two before, had placed boughs on the snow to sit upon while he watched the wide river level for deer. We saw a few wolf signs about these terraces, and some of bear, with two broods of willow ptarmigan, these quite tame.

The next day we explored the high level country between the rivers, a region of rolling barrens with small lakes. It was really unexplored ground. The outward route of the Indians traverses some of the lakes, but we saw no signs of it then. In wiry grass by a brook were some beautiful rock ptarmigan, running fast with heads low, and rising suddenly with a cackle for their short flights. They were utterly indistinguishable when motionless, simulating the stones, which were light colored with black and gray lichens. In the hand the birds seemed most conspicuous, with their large white underpatches.

In a place among the hills that was slightly sheltered and had a few scattering trees we saw a half dozen shrikes; I am not sure that I had ever seen more than one at a time before, anywhere. They eat small mice, and of course birds, but the horned larks which were about would seem too large for shrikes to manage; in numbers they could do so. But the mice everywhere about that year were more than abundant enough for all shrikes. Indians give the unpleasant name of Torturer to the shrike, for it plays with its victims like a cat, picking them gradually away. To the eye the bird offers no suggestion of being predatory, much less of being revoltingly cruel. Most predatory creatures, however beautiful, suggest the destroyer in some way, by their claws or beaks or teeth at least, but the slight down-nib of the shrike is scarcely noticeable, while his gray and dark effect suggests the peaceful and Quakerish. In company with a mocking bird and a cuckoo, he would look to be a creature of about the same ways. It hurts to find so amiable looking a creature of this aspect with such bad instincts toward its own

nearest kind. Whether or not murderers are usually labelled as such by Nature, we always expect them to be.

In the afternoon a wolverene came loping, woodchuck like, across the way, at eighty yards. W. sat down on the sloping ground for a steady shot and I whistled sharply. The animal faced and stopped. A handsome shot W. made, just under the chin and from end to end. It was a strong-looking brute. An autopsy proved it full of mice. We skinned it and took the broad skull. I, chiefly, had officiated, and an astonishing musty smell remained on my hands. To live it down might take weeks, I thought, but in a day or two it faded away.

We were pleased over our wolverene episode, for one might be a long time in the country without seeing one, especially in summer, and it is an interesting species. This one may have weighed forty or fifty pounds. No creature is so hated in the North, for none is so cunning and destructive, none so hard to destroy. Its practice of carrying off and hiding what it cannot eat gives the impression of actual malice, especially as it burglarizes not only eatables, but all sorts of equipment, even to the camp kettle. Once snow has leveled over its tracks its hidings are safe. Caches have to be placed high for any security, with an overhanging platform. Many an Indian, and even many a family, has perished by the agency of this evil genius of the North. "We know he is possessed of an evil spirit," Indians say, "because he has been the death of so many persons." Steel traps he understands, and is rarely caught, but pulls out the back of the pen and gets the bait without penalty. He may follow a line of traps





SUMMER WOLVERENE



WOLVERENE, UNDER SIDE



for forty miles, taking every bait and whatever game has been caught. Sometimes he is outdone by the "double set"—one trap set as usual, for him to avoid, another concealed with all art in an unusual position. Stories of the occasional circumvention of the pest are cherished among the hunters.

When the Indians do catch one they sometimes torture him in mere exasperation, as well as to deter the other wolverenes from pursuing their evil ways, for by agencies we do not recognize they will know the victim's fate.

The beast inspires vindictiveness in most amiable persons. While McKenzie was at Chimo he had some traps out and was troubled by a wolverene family. Although he managed to catch the young ones, the old mother was too clever for him, and he finally resorted to a spring gun with a bait, and four steel traps set about. When the beast pulled on the bait the gun only snapped without going off, but, startled, the animal jumped and landed in one of the traps, and by the time Peter came along she had picked up two or three more.

Peter related that he sat down and looked at her awhile, then took a stick and beat her well, and so on for some time before he killed her. As Peter had a singularly amiable temperament the incident may be taken as showing that few dispositions can bear the wolverene test.

The carrying off of things that are of no use to the creature concerned seems to go with an unusual degree of intelligence, as in the crow kind, the jays, and the well-known mountain rat of the West. This last creature, not really a rat at all, by the way, stops at nothing. A tent with a

floor is his natural abiding place. Shoes, hair-brushes, all toilet things that are within his strength disappear under the floor of nights. In Idaho, long ago, one of them stripped us without compunction, until at last we pulled up a floor board and watched as we could. As we were sitting silently one day, the rat's furry tail was seen to move in the end of a joint of stovepipe. We clapped pieces of board over the ends of the pipe and carried it some distance away before letting the rat out. Intelligent, he took the hint and never came back.

From the higher hills that day we observed widely. The Mistastin valley appeared to ascend rather rapidly southwest. North, across the Assiwaban, where the view was far, the country had almost no trees, was smoother and more barren, the surface less covered in. Our last view north and west was from a great headland of the Assiwaban, some ten miles above the forks. This promontory is mostly sheer, and thirteen or fourteen hundred feet high. A golden eagle hung over the river, a little below our level, the sun touching well his bronze back. He was in keeping with the cliffs and depths below, and the wide, barren, but inspiring wilderness that stretched away at our level. I have seen few eagles in the country; all were the golden species.

Save for the Mistastin not one side stream, in all probability, comes into the river at the valley level, from tide water to the plunging falls by which the stream descends from the plateau. On the north side there are no branches at all save for inconsiderable tumbling brooks, and the length of river I have observed must be as much as sixty miles in a straight line. The north side of the

river valley is almost a wall, sloping or sheer, from end to end. There is nothing like a notch for fifty miles, and then only a V-shaped ravine, with a trifling brook, and rising sharply to the plateau level.

It is much the same with Labrador valleys all the way southward around to the Saguenay, which is the great type of the Gulf and East Coast rivers. Not one, save the Assiwaban, that I know of, but has more than one deep-cut side valley in its entire length.

Scattered over the country as they were let down by the ice are unnumbered erratic boulders. They are conspicuous on many of the ridges at a great distance. A curious kind of boulder occurs here and there which weathers down into light-brown rhomboid fragments the size of stove coal; they must have come from somewhere west and north.

Until we turned back for camp there had been some breeze in our faces, and no trouble from mosquitoes. Now they accumulated rapidly and were as bad as I have ever seen them even on these white moss barrens. They covered W.'s long back in a solid brown mass. He would ask me to scrape them off, but I could not make up my mind to do it with my hand, and always got a branch to clear the repulsive swarm off with. I did not have as many as W., my coat being smooth; they like fuzzy cloth and light-colored surfaces. The last four or five miles into camp we were hard pushed, came in running, and were punished well while trying to start a fire.

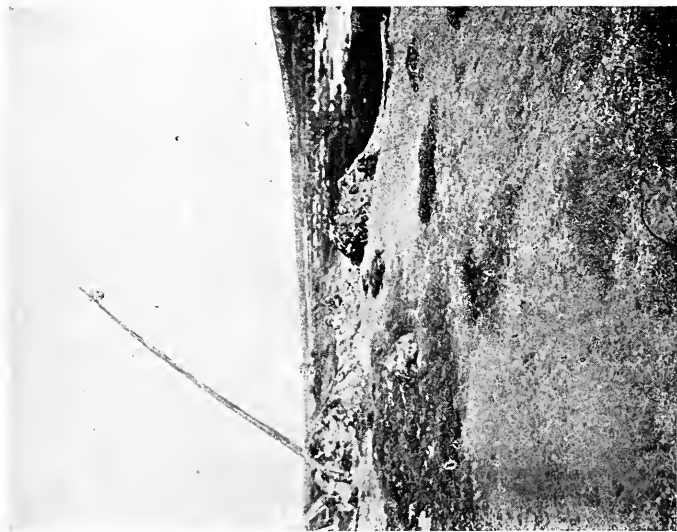
There were a good many showers that trip, in fact sun-showers are the summer feature away from the coast, and often it took a little time to start

a fire; at least, one of us had to hold the match until it was almost wholly burned. While the match was burning we could not brush mosquitoes without agitating the air and putting it out, and the enemy would settle down fast on our hands. Meanwhile the operator was defenseless. We agreed afterward that the most trying experience of the summer was having to hold the match until it burned out.

The high barrens are fully as bad as any other place, little as they look it, and there mosquitoes are largest. In bushy places and sometimes close to water black flies are troublesome, but they go to sleep at night and one can get along, while the mosquitoes keep on. They try one's nerves. Low tells of one of his young men who was taking a round of angles somewhere in this country; he persevered for a time, though hard pressed, but finally dropped his hands and burst into tears — it was too much.

If Walcott had known how he looked the first three days on the river he would have needed good courage to keep on. He was swelled up nearly to blindness; his nearest friend would hardly have known him. By the third day the swelling goes down and does not again appear, for that season at least. This 1904 trip was the worst for heat and flies of any I have had in the Northeast.

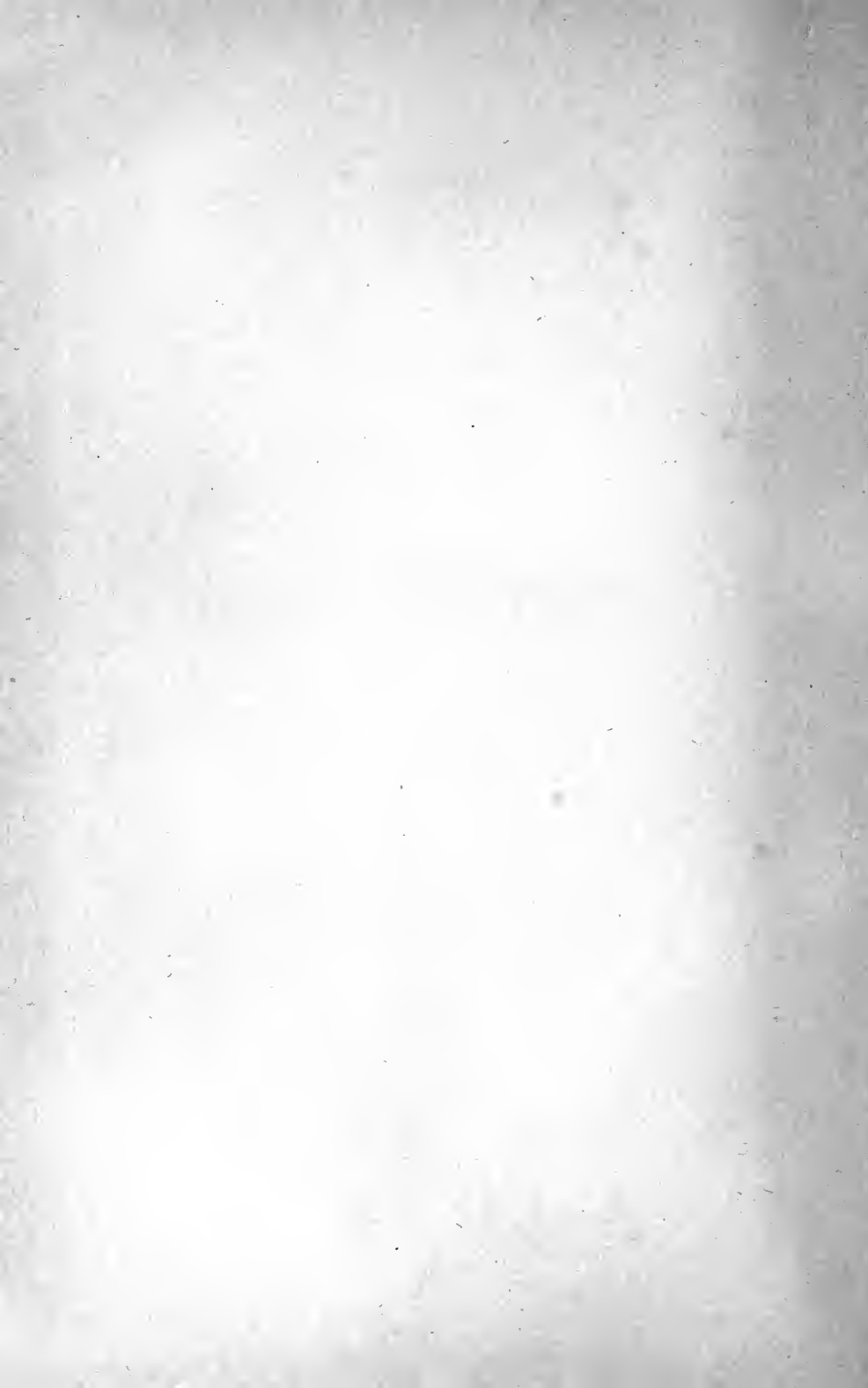
It is a blessed thing that mosquito torture vanishes easily from the mind when the actual infliction is over. So it was that evening at the forks; once in the smoke, and equilibrium restored, we thought only of the interesting day. Neither of us had ever been in really unexplored ground before, and that day we had probably overlooked one thousand square miles of which it was im-



AN INDIAN OFFERING. BEAR'S SKULL ON POLE



A WEATHERED BOULDER, MISTASTIN LAKE





possible to get any description at the shore. It was not only fresh ground, but inspiring to look upon and walk over. A country more inviting to the feet would be hard to find; one never knows when to stop.

Here the variation of the compass was about forty-one degrees. The place was about forty-six miles from the mouth of Assiwaban as we had come. The trout here evidently belonged to Mistastin waters, brilliant, beautiful fish, not rangy like those of the main stream, and their quality was more than skin deep.

At 4.30 in the morning we were awakened by the sound of a paddle working against a gunwale down toward the main stream. Looking out of the tent, a canoe with two Indians was turning up from the main stream to our place. When they saw us the sound of the paddles quieted; it had been their door bell, for wilderness people do not approach one's house unannounced. A white man might have shouted, but these people avoid calling out, and all other sounds that startle. They were a man and boy, in an empty canoe, without arms. I knew them both from the year before, and was able to give them photos of themselves. There were seven more of them, they said, just below. They accepted tea and bread, but declined the bacon. The man took up a little cache nearby, and a tin can which we had noticed just back of the tent hanging to a tree. We talked awhile, and he drew a map on the sand showing the high portage and some of the country beyond. After half an hour he asked for a gun and cartridge, with which he promptly fired a signal shot, which was answered from below around the bend. Presently more firing came,

with a peremptory sound, and our guests started away, we putting in and following, to see the rest of the party.

A noticeable thing had happened when I showed them a group picture taken at the post the year before. They were interested and pleased, picking out the faces easily, until they came to one of a man who had died during the year. The effect was remarkable, the man looked almost frightened and his voice sank. "Tshipi," he said, "A spirit." His disquietude was evident.

The people below turned out to be young men, in charge of a younger man I had met before, who withal was somewhat inflated by his temporary dignity. There seems to be always a chief, some one in authority, wherever Indians are found.

When they saw us coming on, in the big canoe, they laughed at something one of them said about us. I doubt if it was really our bad paddling or absurd way, indeed, of sitting, though it may have been these. It is likely, rather, that they saw what guys we would be on the high portage with such a craft, and on the long portages beyond. There is no telling, however, what may seem the funniest thing to them when a white man is trying to do Indian things.

I showed the group picture again, among others, and while they were interested and picking out the faces watched to see if they also took notice of the one who had died. I should have known it with my back turned, for the same "Tshipi" was whispered, the same silence and uneasiness came over all, and very shortly they renewed their preparations to embark.

Their being shaken was not very strange. To be presented unexpectedly with the speaking like-

ness of one near and intimate who has just died is naturally affecting to any one; it would be to one of ourselves. Nevertheless the extreme awe that was shown, resulting in such curiously identical manifestations of manner and words, seemed more than one would expect. In truth, as I came to know in time, seeing the picture was to their minds perilously near to seeing the departed. Anything belonging to a person who has died is in their view of most doubtful omen to the living; even the name is not to be spoken, and if another has the same name it is changed. A lapse in these things results in distress to the departed spirit, and it may be in visitations by the *tshipi* upon those behind. And ghosts, the world over, are not welcome visitors.

We soon parted; they expected to be back in four days. This looked unlikely, for they could not possibly tell how long the salt water voyage would take, even though they reached Opetik that night. We agreed to look for them, however.

It was W.'s first view of Naskapi; their irresponsible look took him between wind and water, particularly certain flannel shirts, worn outside, for a deerskin breechcloth does not lend itself to ordinary dispositions. These, with their unconventional legs, were a bit unusual. I explained that they merely called the shirt a sweater, and wore it outside.

We went back to camp and took a day off, mending and knocking about near by for a few birds and fish. I boiled W.'s wolverene skull and cleaned it partly, though not enough; it raised a fearful smell in the boat later. The meat looked so good boiled that I cut off a bit and found it perfectly eatable. The Indians eat it only when starving,

and "Carcajou-eater" is a fighting word in some regions; nor will they ordinarily put the skin with others, but tie it to the sled somewhere outside. Some will not sell so hated and despised a thing, though they let the women trade them if they want to.

The river above, to the high portage, became swifter and swifter, often too much so for us to pole. W. had a pair of lace boots, admirable for wading, and with his long legs would wade up the swift stretches as fast as I could get along the shore with a pole to fend off, which I did mainly to save appearances. There is little fishing above the forks, and what trout we got about the eddies near the portage were not much over a pound weight, that I remember. The portage matched the Indians' description well, and I felt sure it was the place, but W., who had not understood the talk, was very doubtful, as he had every right to be. The place looked impassably steep and high. Part of it is a steady, virtually pathless climb of eight hundred feet, the whole height from the river up being eleven hundred feet. One really needs hands as well as feet a good deal of the way. The finding of Indians' tracks leaving the river settled all questions of being in the right place, but we soon lost what trail there was and went up where the climb was over twelve hundred feet. The Indians use the portage only when going down river. We spent some hours off west and southwest, seeing many ponds and the smooth, bold ridges of the height of land some miles beyond, but we did not see the actual divide that year. Deer tracks were few. There were some few ptarmigan about, fairly grown; we lunched off some of them beside one of the ponds.

We discussed a walking trip. While it seemed feasible to get the canoe up the hill in the course of a day or two, it was beyond us to get it on over the long portages westward. If the next day, August 6th, had been decently cool and the flies had not been unusually fierce, I think we should have made a few days' walk, though we were rather limited as to possibilities. Without a canoe we could not do much with the lakes, and we had in mind no special objective; on the other hand, we could easily catch the next steamer back, and this was some object to us both that year. Finally we turned back down river again, after a swim and a time of drying damp outfit. There had been many showers, and our things had become uncompanionable.

It was remarkable how long the distance seemed down the swift water to the forks, and the rough places looked worse than coming up. Judging by both time and distance we thought it must be twenty miles. But going down a current one follows around the very widest swings of such a river as it goes from side to side of the valley. We may actually have gone twenty miles, but a fair estimate down the middle of the reaches might be nearer fifteen.

We had a little dread as the wind lake came on, lest it turn another gale upon us, but it stayed perfectly calm. We held on until eleven to get through, dropping down to sleep on a flat sand bar without a tent, flies or no flies. On the 7th, next day, the two great pools in the trout reach were full of twenty-inch fish, nibbling quietly at the myriad black flies which lay in wavy lines and patches on the water. The ripples of these fish looked like those of five or six inch chubs, taking flies carefully without showing themselves.

But every one of those little ripples stood for near three pounds of fish, certainly two and a half. A very large one struck my fly and bored heavily down, presently getting away with the hook and snell through a careless knot. In a moment there was a heavy splash and the fish ran on his side for the shore, shaking his head to get rid of the fly. He was nearly all out of water for two or three hundred feet and looked at least six pounds. Reaching the shore he nearly grounded for good, but got off. He was doubtless a *namay-cush*, though there is no reason why the *fontinalis* should not grow to almost any size there. This pool is nearly half a mile long and a thousand feet wide, a great feeding-ground in summer. The deep wind lake above must make an unusually good wintering place for all fish, especially during the hibernation periods some of them indulge in. There are whitefish in the river, and this year, 1910, I was interested at finding on the shore a ling, or fresh-water cod, of sixteen inches. As to the size of trout, I have weighed sea trout up to eleven pounds at the shore, and have seen one or two after they were split that were surely up to fourteen. The bay people speak of very large *fontinalis*, fresh-water trout, in certain streams near the Assiwaban, and doubtless reliably, for these salt-water fishermen are not excitable about fish weights.

A few miles above the falls W. saw a caribou stag on the shore and handsomely gave me the shot. It took three well-placed 30.30s to get him off his feet; they are often that way, but the 30.30 is not a smasher.

On the morning of the 8th we passed the Indian portage, leaving some forty pounds of

flour for the returning party, who were not nearly on time; it was more than five days since they had left us, instead of the four they had laid out. On the large boulders below the falls were some twenty seals, left high by the tide, and looking odd enough there, one capping each rock, with head and tail far overhanging. One by one they slid off. We had the deer-meat and let them swim close without firing.

A little thing happened at the mouth of the river which may have a moral. Edmund Winters and his large family were there fishing trout and sealing. As the tide was in we did not land, but Edmund followed us along the shore with obvious intention, so we turned in and waited. He had a pair of seal trousers he wanted to sell, with a little wall pocket or two made of loon skins, worth perhaps \$2 or \$3 altogether. We did not want them, and had nothing less than a \$5 bill. After some talk I ungraciously took them and handed over the bill, telling him not to think every Yankee traveler was going to pay double price. I appreciated the size of his tremendous family a little. Two years later I came to his place in something of a pickle, and he and his wife volunteered a very good and unexpected turn to help me. A case of bread upon the waters.

Voisey took us to Nain in his long, keelless trap boat. She could run and reach, but this was beating, and in a cold northeaster three or four degrees above freezing. We had two shivering days of it. Once we towed the canoe under, had to let go, and afterward round up a sea of scattered oars, paddles, and what not, in a lively slop. Again I was not sorry for having held on very long sometimes in the other kind of weather on this

Jekyl-and-Hyde coast. You get chilled and circulationless and miserable, the back wind from the sails penetrates like a forced draught, which it is. Winter travel inland, in less clothes, at forty and fifty degrees below zero is nothing to it. Yet these seals of people who live in the bays can sit in a boat a week, I believe, and beat into the wind happily.

We slept in the boat the first night. Somewhere on Paul's Island, where we tented comfortably the second night, a pair of the light-colored gyr-falcons of the coast shrilled fiercely in their wonderful flights about the cliff above us. Their nest was there. *They* are not disguised, wolves in sheep's clothing, as are the shrikes. The expression of every feather and outline, every note of their cry, is unmistakable. Fierce, they are beautiful, admirable. They were numerous that year, nesting on many cliffs of the islands, and far inland.

We were traveling by the large passage next east from the one we had gone south from Nain by, and by the middle of the forenoon, the 10th, were in sight of Nain bay and could see our uncertain steamer if she came in. If we had lost her we should have been black enough about it. By noon we were in Nain, and as things were, with four days to wait. The *Virginia* had waited three extra days for the races at St. John's, and laid by a day for the northeaster. We might have seen the height of land, and at least one of its great lakes, and not missed her. And the Indians. So we know now.

Of the kindness of the mission, of the atmosphere of the old consecrated life there, long established, the old garden of weathered spruce and





ON THE HIGH PORTAGE. THE STEEPER PART IS BELOW



A GOOD ROOF



larch stretching back under the protecting hill, its paths once paced by feet now passed to better walks,—these things have been told by other pens. It was for us a peaceful time.

W. turned from his vision of cat-like, furtive land savages to the sturdy, cheerful, available Eskimo, tamed and instructed—with decision, and wandered hills with Aaron, a good man who spoke English.

What I did has faded. I doubtless had talks on the wharf and lingered meanwhile on memories of what had been. In time W. returned, and we sat by the real shrine of the days, a large jar of tobacco. Even Aaron, with his Eskimo smile, Aaron the presentable, had not endured. Perhaps it was only that the shooting he took W. for came out small, that his fish did not bite well. He was really a good man; still his English was too good, he had once been out in the world.

Then I took him up, with dreams of my own. Aaron knew the inland. He had been far in in winter, even to "Ungava Pond." It was a long way in, and very large; you could not see the shores across. It was one hundred miles wide. The Great Grampus lived there, who raised tremendous seas and hauled boats under.

Here was opportunity. I began a map, carried it as far as I could myself, then brought A. into it and we proceeded; he was definite enough and things prospered. I was elated. We were at it some time, working on rather remote territory. Then a creeping doubt came. Suspicious, I led very gently to ground I knew, and about which also he was perfectly clear. In five minutes it was plain that he had never been there and knew as good as nothing about it. I sought the wharf.

Ungava means the farther or farthest place. For two or three years I was at a loss to locate Ungava Pond. Several of the coast rivers along were said to lead there. "You can go to Ungava Pond by that river," was said of each one. In the end I became satisfied that coast people had some report of Lake Michikamau, the source of Northwest River, and used it as a basis for their relations. That any Eskimo has ever been there is most difficult to believe.

On this coast "pond" and "brook" are names for largest inland waters; "lake" and "river" are terms for the smaller ones. Rapids are "rattles"; the reaches between are "steadies"; falls are "overfalls."

On the way home we were off a day at Tilt Cove, with its great copper mine, where Mr. Williams, the manager, overwhelmed us with good things. Cigars such as we had almost forgotten were opened, and other things, with unwonted sounds as of popping. On the *Glyde*, to Lewisport, were Mr. Berteau and Mr. White, of St. John's. One is never very far from home connections, for the former proved to be a far cousin; his grandmother was a Cabot in our island of Jersey. Altogether, save for the flies and the immovable canoe, yclept Raft, the world did us well that year.

## *Chapter VII*

1905

AUGUST of 1905 found two hard-working travelers again inching their way up the high portage of the Assiwaban. The place is without doubt one of the harder places of Canada to deal with when one is under a pack. For myself the last pull to the top came near being too much. I half gave up, crawled around the slope until I found water, then, revived, finished out. It was a warm, breathless day. My companion, Lewis Quackenbush, of New York, a young, strong man of a good deal of southern-slope experience, did better than I. We took up only one load a day. The canoe, a good birch of fairly portable weight, we got off rather easily with, passing it from one to the other and each going light between turns. In going down the place on the return journey, one of us fell while crossing a rock-slide and dropped the canoe, but it was not hurt to speak of.

The outfit was all up the 5th of August, and we camped a mile on at the second pond. Trout of six or eight inches took the fly well; deep little fish of electric quickness, very dark on the back and very yellow beneath, like those of the Newfoundland ponds. They may belong to a subspecies, which may include also the bright Mistastin trout. I regret not saving specimens.

One expects the fish of such far waters that have never known the hook to be wholly without caution, but even these small fish, eager enough

at first, became noticeably wary of the fly by the time a meal or two of them had been caught. So it is almost everywhere by daylight, though at dusk or even in darkness trout seem to lose all reason. They will take ordinary worm bait on exceptionally dark nights, from Maine to Labrador.

Rambling about near a pond a little south of our route, we came upon a low set of lodge poles, such as the Indians use for their small skin traveling tents. A spray of evergreen had been placed where the poles joined at the top. This was their date record. Any one following could tell by the fading of the twigs very nearly when the party had camped there.

These skin traveling tents are shaped like a broad collar when laid out flat. They will not catch fire, being indeed about the only kind of small tent in which one can have an open fire without calamity. Moreover, they have the advantage of stretching into almost any shape, and even size.

We went on heavy loaded and very slowly, making triple portages between the ponds. The canoe was rather overweight, even in this my third year of preparation for the country. When dry it may not have weighed over seventy-five pounds, but a birch takes up water with continuous use, and with the paddles this one carried heavier than it ought to. As to provisions, it is well to have plenty, for they can be discarded at any time if game proves reliable, but the full amount we had did give us hard work on those first wet portages.

In the spring I had ordered a canvas canoe, to be especially light, though deep, from a maker whom I will not expose. The outcome was the worst-looking boxy affair I ever saw, weighing



INDIAN CAMP IN THE BARRENS



A TRAVELING TENT





sixty-eight pounds. Probably half the weight was in paint and "filler," the latter virtually paint too. Sixty-eight pounds is not so bad, but the timbering was very light, and Q. thought the whole fabric might dissolve under us. His birch, from Lake St. John, on the Saguenay, was as good as a birch could be, so we cached my craft above Assiwaban Falls and kept along in his. It is fair to say that Q. did most of the canoe carrying. He was tall, strong, and weighty, and could carry in a wind when I could not. My canoe would have taken up little or no water, and kept its lightness, especially as it would have kept dry inside; a birch will never keep wholly dry on a shallow, stony route.

There had been a good deal of ice coming north. The usual pack at Harrigan was solid on the land the 22d of July, hard, green salt-water ice, more or less rafted. Some tourist passengers wanted to go on to see Nain, and for two or three hours the *Virginia* rammed the pack with a will. She would back up a few lengths, head for the weakest place, and fetch up with a heavy boom. A wonderful sealer's hull she had, unsparing of material, greenheart sheathed and doubly ironed about the sloping bow. Like a crowbar she rammed her way, scarcely quivering as she fetched up short. No one minded the bow, it could take care of itself. Directed at a weak place not too high above water it would merely lift a little and stop. Sometimes the edge of the pan would sink or split and pass to the sides, but the bow stood all and everything. The stern, the vulnerable heel, was another matter. There, and not at the bow, were stationed the sharper eyes of the boat. On each side a man watched keenly the clear depths, lest

the ice that kept swinging into the open space astern should foul the screw before it could be stopped. Some of the flinty green walls ran down twenty-odd feet, perhaps thirty. A moderate touch of the screw to one of the harder under tongues and we were helpless. It was all in vain, we could see Fanny's, but never reached it. The experience was a touch of the real Arctic. The dank chill of the pack was penetrating. Nearby on the ice at one place was a large shark, hauled out who knows where in the North by Eskimo. Seventy or eighty bergs stood in a long crescent beginning near us to the north and sweeping far around toward the west, and the black desolation of the high, snow-streaked land against the evening sky completed the Arctic aspect. It was the 22d of July.

The enthusiasm of the passengers to reach Nain, as a sort of Farthest North possible, was not so keen by the time we turned back. They had had their taste of the real thing, on a safe scale, and were pretty well satisfied. As the novelty wore away, the boom and impact and throw of the vessel became tiresome, if not suggestive of untoward happenings. The pack we had approached with eagerness had become a forbidding world of ice. A friend at home, who once steamed to the edge of the polar ice field from Norway, has related that some of the party were so overwhelmed at the cruel sight as to burst into tears. Shrinking to the cabin they remained there until the vessel steamed away and the ice was well behind.

By the time the long twilight came on we had had more than enough of the ice, and were ready to take to the cabin ourselves. But all was not over. The North had yet to make its parting,

in a way we little thought. As we were about to go below, leaving those who could deal with the situation to do so, there fell across the sea from some distant horizon around the cape an after-light of the sunset, touching with warm color a few heaved-up points of the ice field and calling into fine rose the whole far-stretching crescent of bergs. In the gray waste they had been all but indistinguishable before. Now, in subdued exquisite flame they came forth over the plain. From a chill desolation the scene was transformed as few places of earth ever are. The ice world was become a vision untold.

At three next morning we were dropped over-side behind the Cape Island, in Windy Tickle, and the steamer returned south. As it happened to be Sunday we did not care to make a start, and piling our things on the shore, we walked across the island to Spracklin's, where all were "ready for the rush"—of cod. There were no fish coming in, of course, though the water was said to be "full of them." The ice was piled up in the harbor entrance.

Next morning the ice had loosened, though as we pulled out of the Tickle to the north it looked as dense as ever outside. Soon two schooners came up behind on the south breeze and entered the pack near us to seaward. They might as well have tried to plough the land, as it looked to me, but they never quite came to a stop, as I remember, and surprisingly soon had a good offing. By night the pack had really begun to string off.

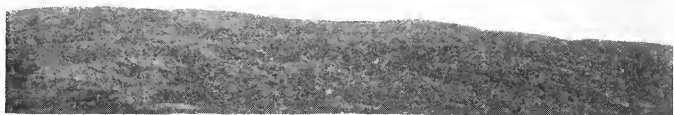
During the next four days we worked our way some seventy-five miles to the Assiwaban. At times the floating bits of ice made the rowing backward annoying. The larger ice lodged out-

side the islands, shutting out all swell, all feel of the sea; we were traveling in level salt water lakes. The more open bays were well lined with pack ice and bits of berg, streaming with water in the sun and wearing away rapidly between tides, for in the long days the water warmed in the inner shallows and coming out with the tide undercut the grounded masses. At low tide some overhanging shelf of several tons' weight would break off and fall six or seven feet flat to the water with a report like a field gun. All night long this artillery would keep up, here and there about the open bays, In daylight, as we rowed by, the effect was startling, and the splash something to be regarded. Any of the higher ice was likely to turn over at any time. Once an under-water table began to lift as I was passing over it, and I had to pull fast to get away. It would be no joke to get hove up that way and dropped into a lot of churning fragments.

Wonderful, often fantastic, are the shapes of the ice. Through one narrow berg fragments had been perforated a row of handsome arches, curiously alike. A mushroom form was common, the stem being shaped by the wash of the warm waves as the tides came and went. All the nights had their strong aurora. We lay upon the smooth moss of the beaches and slept under its splendor. On those calm nights the cold air over the icy sea of the archipelago met the warm air of the inland as in a wall. Then would appear a marvelous waving band following high over the shore line, a great scroll rolling and unrolling from horizon to horizon. Folding and unfolding it stretched from northwest to southeast. We never felt like turning in to sleep in its presence; again and again we



GUESTS



BARREN GROUND LAKE, TSHINUTIVISH, 1906 (Page 271)



would uncover our faces for a last look. How far it extended in such times of widespread calm would be hard to say. Around the entire continental north, perhaps, its white wraith shone, a map supernal of the subarctic shores.

At Un'sekat we stopped. I had not been there since Antone and I sailed away that dark day two years before. Only Mrs. A. and the daughter were there at the time. There was not very much to say, we were two white travelers and imposed our atmosphere; the trout were good. It was still early, and we pushed along a bay before camping, while the weather served.

Up Voisey's bay next morning we had a following wind. It was interesting to see how the two canoes compared with each other. Mine was as smooth as a piano, and when rowed in calm water went well. Under sail, too, and our sails were exactly alike, she would draw away from the birch. But let a little sea come on and her broad bilges begin to pat, and the half-mysterious lines of the Indian birch told. *She* was designed. If the birch had had the smoothness of my boat she would easily have passed ahead at all times.

There were fish enough up through the river, none of more than four pounds. Q. did most of the poling, he was better at it than I, and the birch did not pole very well; she had a paddling model. I would walk the bank along the rapids, mostly to lighten the boat. The sand beaches carried some tracks. Wolves seemed numerous, though we saw none, nor heard them nights. We may have seen the tracks of a hundred or two during the trip.

We were both doubtful sleepers, none the less so in mosquito country, and during the first of

the trip found it well to stop early and put up good defenses for the night. So it was that when we found calm water in the wind lake we camped with the worst place ahead of us, although it was long before sunset. Q. could hardly believe that so small-appearing and calm a water need be much regarded. But it is not for nothing that this is held to be one of the places where the Great Grampus is in charge, for with a norther which came on over night we were half a day, wet and devilled about by the backwash from the long swing of the rocky north portal, before being safe out of the lake. Five times now I have gone through the place on perfectly flat water; five times, on the other hand, the Grampus has lashed his tail; five times the Indians' Underwater People have been awake. People of the open know that only when these powers of the water places are occupied or asleep should one try to travel. A good offering to them, at least, is indispensable.

Two or three miles above the lake a canoe with three Indians shot around the far bend. They turned in and we met at the bank. I knew them all, Ostinitsu, Pah-kuun-noh, and, now a young man, Nah-payo, or Nah-harpao, the "One-who-sees-far." Old O.'s name means, inappropriately now, "The Young Man," and P.'s the "Man-of-the-Sea," or Sailor-man. Before making a fire they cautiously placed a circle of wet sand on the moss, for the weather was dry, and only white men burn their own country. We had a good luncheon; they were glad to have our tobacco, tea, and sugar, with the other things of our list. Deer, they said, were scarce at Tshinutivis, but they had enough fish. The winter had been hard. They were thin and looked overworked. It was a



friendly meal, and they stood the camera well enough afterward; as usual the old man winced a little.

Off they went, with no gun, having only a deer spear in the boat and not much fur, making fast time with their three paddles. The boat was a birch of some power, built by O. himself. "Ehe," he had said, "Astulán." "Yes, I build canoes." They sat low, hard down on their heels, and flew down the current for the great portal.

There were no recent deer tracks at the forks. Above there, sometimes, a fresh track slanted down one of the high cut banks, visible in the sliding sand from a half mile away. Sometimes there were two tracks, a little apart and parallel, as caribou best like to go.

Mosquitoes were much as of old, the trip through. Q., in the assurance of long experience on the southern slope of far trips up Peribonka and other rivers of the Saguenay basin, had regarded with some indifference my display of fly protectives,—gloves and veil and kerchiefs and tar grease, and my net-fronted helmet for nights. I folded them all away and bided the future. Somewhere along the river the evil day came. Q. was tall and strong and energetic, a figure in the open. When the time came his shock of hair stood all ways, and he swung his long arms like flails. "You told me! You told me how it would be! But I never *dreamed* anything about it!"

As we entered the unknown country west we were a little the worse for wear. Coming from the steamer soft and out of training we had fallen upon the long pull up the coast, with some head wind, and this getting from the steamer to the Assiwaban, which could have been done in one

easy day from Nain, if our plans to leave the steamer there had worked out, had taken the first freshness out of us. It was the old story, men from town fall away at first under heavy work. One depends on the first days of physical fizz and enthusiasm to get an offing, but these were now used up, and though an easy four or five days along the river would have restored the balance, we did not feel like taking the time, late as we were. Once on the portages of the high inland, the canoe felt heavy, and the outfit too. The assurance that went with having these things meant a great deal to Q.; he preferred to travel with all chances eliminated, so far as possible, and was willing to carry the weight. The shadow of Hubbard's history was a little in the air then.

Wet weather came on at our second camp on the highlands. A shower was coming when we landed at the head of a pond, and as usual we simply lay down with the tent laid over us and waited. For more than an hour the water came down as it rarely does there. Gradually the little brooks from the folds of the tent worked inside and found us, and in time, wet enough, we put up the tent. It had seemed as if the pour would never stop. Once the tent was standing, of course the rain let up, and a cold north wind came on with finer rain. There was not much wood, it was hard to get dried out. In the morning we took over a load to the next lake, perhaps a mile and a half, largely through bogs now afloat. The brown waterproof bags, a provision of Q.'s, were saving things then. They are invincible. Poured full of flour one of them lay out two nights and a day in the rain and was none the worse. They carried beautifully well, too.



OFF FOR THE SHORE



BLEACHED HORNS, MISTINIPI, 1910



Through the day we got an occasional spreading stump from the neighborhood, and kept a fire until three or four in the afternoon. It is a curious thing that we stood propped on our legs by that fire practically all that day, torpid, and never thought to get something to sit on. We merely turned one damp side to the fire and then the other, standing. At last we got a meal, and slept a long, flyless night.

Mornings and evenings there came a curious, lamb-like bleating from the scrub down at the end of the pond; for a time we could not make it out. It came from willow ptarmigan. The bushes were nearly like a henyard with feathers, and we saw a good many birds, large and able to fly well now. They were everywhere where there was any cover that year; one ought to have picked up forty or fifty in two or three hours of kicking about the scrub places. Slight cover of some sort occurs in a good many places, although most of the country along this reach is barren and monotonous, and peculiarly desolate and unattractive in dark weather.

The difference between the walking in really wet weather and dry is very great. No country need be better than this is in continued dry weather, when even the lower grounds between ponds are perfectly passable, though sometimes uneven with tussocks and large stones, or somewhat quaking when one goes over with a heavy load on; the general country is open and but for field-stone boulders might do in places for a motor car.

A few days' rain and the slipperiness and puddling tendency of the light felspathic soil changes the footing abominably. The swamps go afloat, one gyrates from boulder to boulder with

heavy wrenching strains from the pack, or has to hoist oneself and load from some swashy black puddle to a stone a foot and a half above, and step down into the mud again, turning and stretching and sidestepping in a most exhausting way. Better a mile of firm, even ground than a hundred feet of this. Nor, again, are some of the quaking bogs anything of the easiest to take a load over in a wet time.

This camp of the northeast weather and the portage beyond were of the soaky kind. There is a Camp Misery somewhere in every one's trip, and though there was nothing particularly salient on this occasion, or novel to either of us, we were just thoroughly uncomfortable for a day or two, and the swampy portage was wearing. Somewhere in it I found where one of the three Indians had sat on a boulder to rest, leaving a pair of deep footprints when he rose to his feet to go on with his load. Their canoe looked to weigh one hundred and twenty-five pounds, and they were light men. There was no trail, for in swampy places each man of a party seeks an untrodden way as being firmer than if puddled up by another traveler. The mat of the bog becomes weakened by repeated passing and may go through. In fact, as to anything like a beaten path, there cannot be more than four or five miles of it that really helps one on the whole Indian route from the coast to the George.

We lunched at the end of a long, narrow pond running near west, and emptying into a Mistastin branch. Up to this time the drainage had been eastward toward the high portage. While we were eating Q. noticed a black bear seven or eight hundred yards away on an easy slope. He was so black as to be almost luminous against

the white moss country. By his sudden moves and snatches he appeared to be mousing. They turn up stones and bits of ground for the mice, and are better at the cat's game than one would think from their figure and size; they are sometimes very funny at it. After awhile the bear came into broken ground and in range of a large boulder, so that we were able to make an approach, when Q. fired two or three shots from his Savage rifle, and we found our victim down presently in a little hollow. We had been fairly concealed, and what with the smokeless powder and slight reports, he never knew where we were.

He was not a large bear, but perhaps as much as three hundred pounds in weight, being almost as broad as a woodchuck. His weight was mainly a matter of fat; it was two inches deep over the back and plenty everywhere it could be, inside and out. Like almost everything else in the country that could eat mice, the bear was full of them. The next year, a hard year for the bears, for there were no mice, I shot one half as large again in frame, but it was not much heavier; there was no fat whatever on him.

The coming in of a stock of good bear meat cheered our way. In the warm weather the fat fell from perfect sweetness in about a day, but the meat itself was extremely good as long as it lasted.

The pond of our little hunt, narrow and about two miles long, we called Bear Pond. A north-wester began to blow as we put off, growing to a very strong gale, and though it would hardly seem possible to become windbound on a narrow pond of this size, getting ahead was so slow and hard, that we actually stopped and camped in a nearly woodless place half way to the end. There was no

putting up a tent, if only for want of poles. In the two days we were there we used up the firewood for a long distance around, though the cooking took little, and the camp was nearly shelterless. Close up under a little fringe of scrub evergreen, a foot and a half high, we had the fire and the cooking things; and behind the only other growth of the kind about we slept. So protected, the night showers blew over us very well. We were comfortable enough, but it is a bleak, windy, exposed country along there, and one may have a real norther with snow any night.

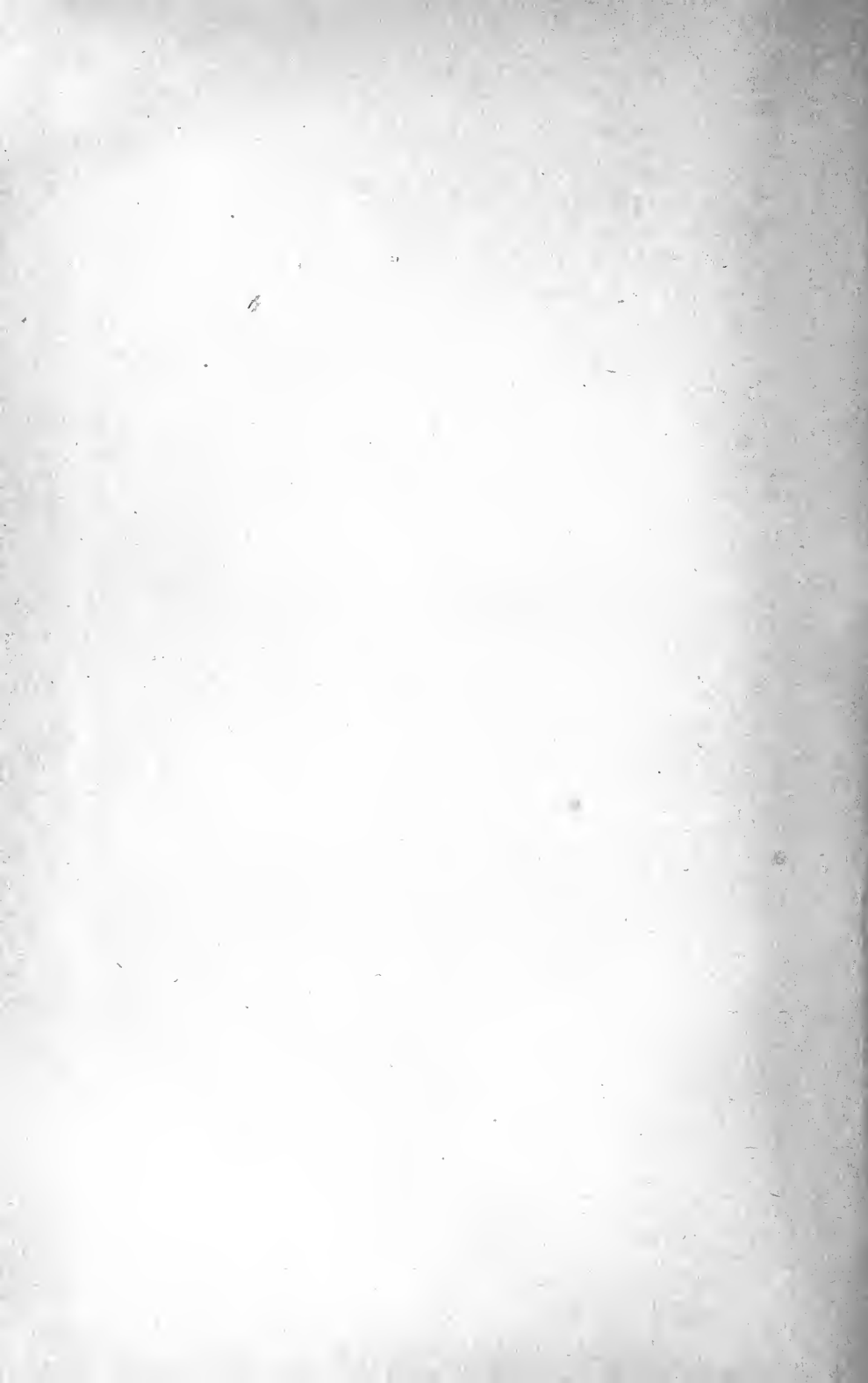
The first afternoon we wandered off west a mile or two to some trees, looking at the country and for game. There was little sign of deer about. Upon a good rise to see from was a great boulder, some ten feet high, riven by frost or some internal stress into fragments with fissures of some size between. I climbed up, but while meditating on the wide stretch of country and the many lakes, a strong, growling sigh came from exactly under me inside the rock, and I got down in a hurry. It is absurd how those sudden four-footed sounds awake old instincts to dodge. It was only an Arctic fox. We could see his dingy summer tail through a large fissure, but it moved in farther and out of sight when touched with a stick.

The wind blew again next day and we put in the time afoot, mainly exploring for the route. Some five miles northwest was a commanding hill of smooth slopes to which we beat up against the gale. There were two visible water routes in that direction, but we could find no signs of travel. We were very close to some, if we had known it; but the route here, in a general way westerly, turns sharply south for a mile and a half and is easy to





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miss. Beyond the high hill, known after 1906 as Caribou Hill, was a fine broad lake. Southeast, and about the rolling plain generally, were forty or fifty lakes and ponds up to four or five miles long. Still a third route used by Indians led south, then west, if we had known, but it was masked from us by a high ridge. The locality was confusing, with its hills and many ponds. The views we took from the hill show little, for in north winds the water looks nearly black from above and photographs badly; at such times the longer slopes of the waves are in shadow, while with wind from the direction of the sun they are lighted. As to finding our route we were little better off at night than in the morning. By evening the wind went down. We fished a little, mainly to find out what there was in the pond, but, surprisingly for that country, had not a bite. After supper an interesting fish near two feet long appeared at the edge of the water, but it had moved out too far by the time Q. could get his rifle and shoot at it. It looked like a whitefish or white sucker. Some sizable pieces of bear fat we had pitched out on the water soon began to wobble and finally disappeared, but we did not see just how. They may have sunk.

As I was knocking about the place in the morning, Q. still asleep, the three Indians we had met in the river valley came almost alongside before I saw them. We turned over our provisions to them and they made a meal, eating much bear but avoiding the fat. They were quite in distress. The *Pelican* had not come, the store was almost bare, and they had been unable to get much; no ammunition, tobacco, nor much of anything; could we let them have some powder and shot and

tobacco? Of course we stripped ourselves of what we could possibly spare. Then we talked about the route and finally arranged with them to help us as far as Mistinipi Lake, if we would not take too much luggage. I took a large waterproof bag and began to put things into it, the heavier things. As it filled up they looked uneasy, and as I remember demurred audibly. Their relief when I finally jammed the heavy bag under the scrub to be left behind was easy to see. Off we went, they having little of their own to carry, and taking some of our things, we doing what we could. It was a warm day of gathering dullness, with flies. The Indians were naturally faster than we were, with their long canoe and three paddles. "Máuats tshílipi!" I exhorted old O. "Do not hurry!" "Máuats!" he answered, and kept his word. On Long Lake we gradually accumulated a cloud of mosquitoes. About the other canoe, fifty feet ahead, they appeared as a bluish nimbus, five or six feet across. I had never seen mosquitoes visible at a distance in that way. Yet I thought the Indians got only about half the actual bites we did, ordinarily. Where a mosquito would pitch upon one of our hands without hesitation, wasplike and end on, it would pause and hover a little over the skin of an Indian and light quietly. The canoes went abreast for a time, and looking across I noticed that old O. had done up his head in a piece of black netting I had given him; he seemed glad to have it. Likewise Indians are ready to accept tar grease after seeing white men use it. They are keen, indeed, to see the advantage of almost any new thing and to make the most of it.

Two or three times while we were with them one of them would go ashore, pull out some dried

meat from under a rock, and carry it back to the canoe. They had provided for their return trip in this way. There was a rifle in their boat now, which had probably been cached somewhere near where we met them first, or perhaps it had been at the post for repairs. They do not seem to have faculty about metal work; William Edmunds, with the Eskimo superiority in such matters, used to fix up their guns for them.

Of course the main work came on the land portages. Q. carried the canoe, I a stout pack on a headstrap. The Indians carried on a line over the head and another over the front of the shoulders, over which was thrown a blanket to take the cut of this line. On the head they placed a bunch of evergreen twigs to take away the cut there of the string. They told me, rightly, that a headstrap alone, as I had it, was not the thing, but I did not venture a change that trip. Their carrying lines were mostly of caribou leather, braided round, a little larger than heavy cod line, say three sixteenths of an inch or more in diameter. In resting we sat down in file on the ground, each man ahead of a boulder, which took the weight of his pack. All one could see looking ahead was a line of large bundles on boulders, with no person in sight. Then all the packs would rise up and move on in procession, each with a thin pair of legs stepping along under it.

Old O. and I took things much alike. If there was an extra turn to make over the portage one of the younger men did it. Q., strong as he was, would nevertheless have enough of the job by the time our canoe was over and was content to drop on the moss and rest. Young Na'pao, fifty pounds lighter, would trot over with their large canoe,

perhaps for his second trip over the portage, and, untouched, would stand at the edge of the water and throw stones. The Indians could have circled around us as we went.

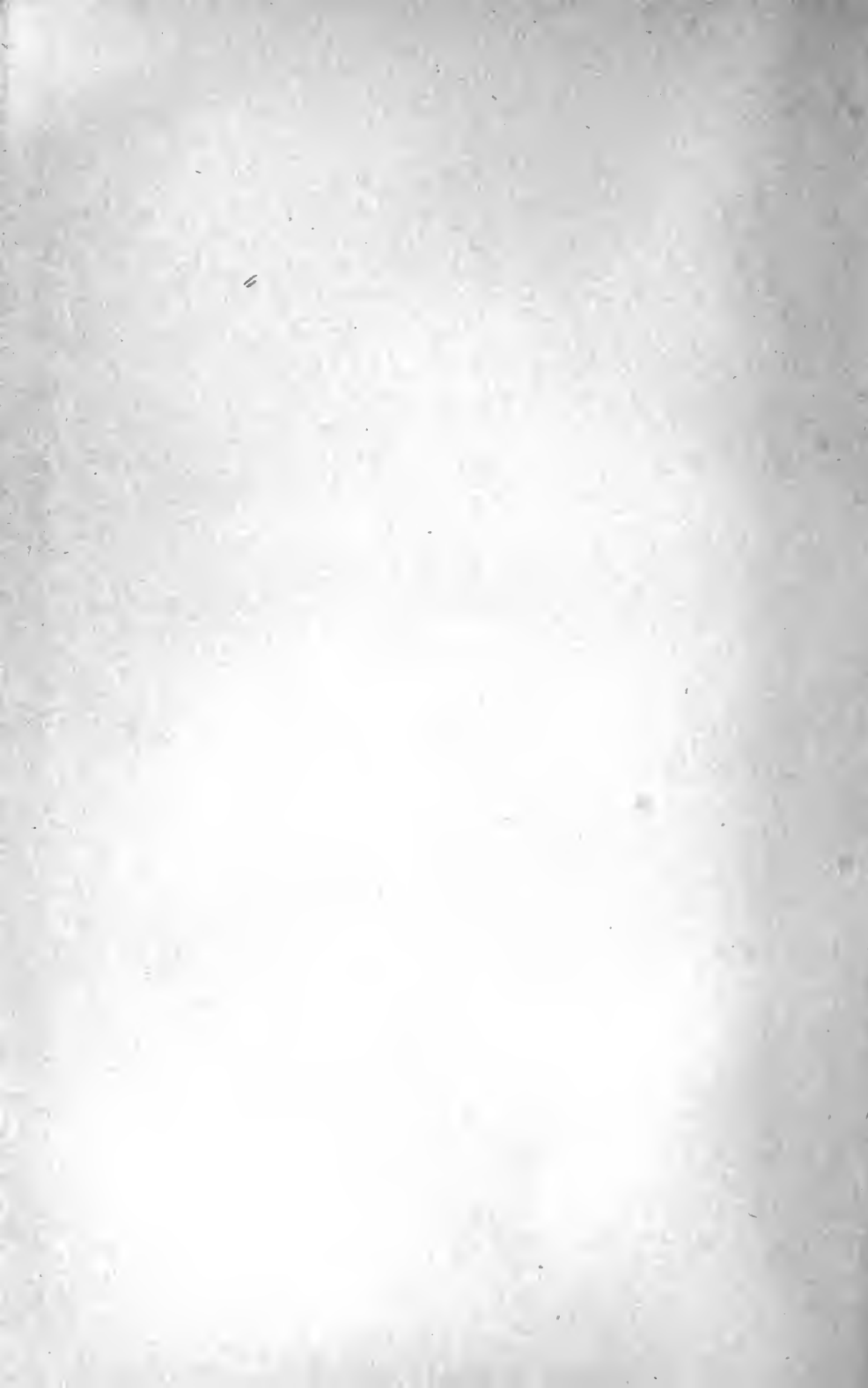
Late in the day I felt pretty well steadied down, and noticed that O. seemed to have about the same gait. "Aieskushin-ah?" I asked, "Are you tired?" "Ehe," "Yes," he said, simply. I was a little surprised, for it is not easy to get Indians, as I know them, to own up to being tired. They are "hungry," generally, that is all. The difference is not so much, for as an old Matterhorn man once said, "If you see a man giving out, *feed* him!"

We passed through seven or eight ponds that day, camping late on a small lake where were a few trees. The route from Long Lake had been shut in among close hills and the ponds and streams between were small. Ledges were rare, the hills being ground smooth by ice-cap action and then more or less carpeted by the thin moss. Where rock showed it was often marked by glacial scratches, and was harder than the felspathic or eruptive base of the more open country toward the coast.

At the little lake where we finally stopped O. walked up with his axe to the largest of a few scattered trees about. It had live branches sloping downward to the ground. On the side away from a possible north storm he trimmed off enough low branches to be able to get in alongside to the trunk, and then thatched in overhead the palm-like boughs he had cut off, placing them at a steep angle. Here, close to the trunk, the three Indians slept, using their little leather tent, a flat affair shaped like an Eton collar six or seven feet wide, for an additional blanket. Though it show-



ON THE ASSIWABAN





ered in the night they were perfectly well sheltered. We, likewise, used our tent as a blanket, and came off fairly well.

We were stirring in the gray of the morning. Pakuunnoh washed his hands in the lake without soap and got breakfast. Their hands seem never grimy or to need care. They kept the dishes clean, the few that there were. At luncheon the day before I had handed our tin pail to Pakuunnoh to make tea. He took off the cover and turned away to get water, but I noticed, though he was looking off absently, that he furtively touched his finger tips to the inside of the pail. They stuck a trifle, we had boiled fat bear in it and not done our washing too well. Pakuunnoh grunted significantly, went silently to the water and scrubbed the pail out well.

As we were putting out from shore, about five, Q.'s hunter eyes caught a caribou stag walking up a distant sky line. He and Napao went after it and surprisingly soon brought back the meat. The stag appeared to have sought the top of a ridge to get its ruminating doze away from flies. The horns were of course in velvet at that time. Napao had tried Q.'s soul while cutting up the deer by slashing into the flinty bones with his fine, hard-tempered knife and taking out liberal nicks. The Indian knives and axes are soft enough to sharpen with a file and do not chip.

At the end of the lake we had to leave some of the meat for our return. I did not know just what to do with it and asked the Indians to cache it for us. P. walked up to a little thick-topped evergreen and shoved it in among the branches; away from the ground on account of the smaller animals, out of sight, on the other hand, from

the ravens and jays. "Shetshimáo!" I objected, "The flies!" "Mauats shetshimao," "No flies," P. returned. When we came back four or five days later, there were some small flyblows on it, but no harm done. But we had had a very cold storm meanwhile, and if it had been warmer there would have been trouble, I should say. Still, without the storm we should have been back much sooner, and this the Indians may have reckoned on.

The height of land came at the head of a fine lake four or five miles long, which we called Hawk Lake, from the falcons' nests on some moderate cliffs near the narrows. The falcons bred on almost all cliffs that year, from the coast in. The actual height of land was a broad, low saddle with a trifling valley or draw through it, and a tiny pond or two. The portage, over smooth, velvety ground, was only thirty or forty feet above the lakes on either side and was little more than a half mile long. Now we were on George River water, a handsome, deep-looking lake with some high cliff shores on the south, and some two miles in length. A rugged portage of two miles, partly on a bad path, brought us to the long eastern tail of Mistinipi. Here, under the sheltering height of land hills to the northeast, quite a belt of trees stretched along the right shore. The savage Baffin's Bay influences were visibly less on this side the watershed. The trees were often straight, in contrast to the desperate gnarled shapes of the Atlantic side. But it was only special sheltered places that showed normal trees; almost everywhere the winter winds from northwest had had a blasting touch, for the trend of the lake basin is that way. On the south for some miles were wonderful

smooth gravel levels, with moss-terraced moraines, and pairs of caribou paths following along the slopes and in places slanting to the water.

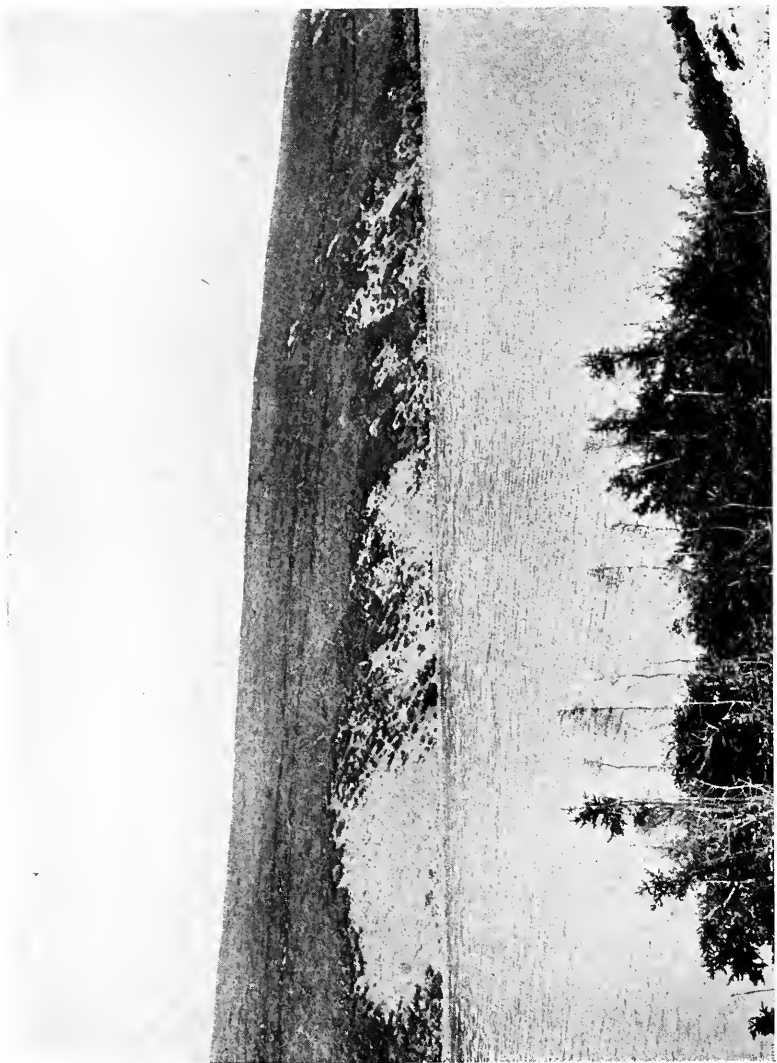
It was very warm that afternoon, close and overcast. Heavy, straight-down showers came now and then, during which we got under rocks or spruces or the boats, as best we might. A mile down Mistinipi is a close narrows, then a fairly wide water, and beyond the lake is two miles wide or more. Then comes the main narrows, where, as another heavy pour came on, we all ran for a cove on the south side. When the rain let up we had a fire and a meal. This last part of the day continued warm and overshadowed, the air hanging with moisture. Something was brewing. The Indians were uneasy to be off. To the last Q. and I argued about going with them. Ostinitsu urged us to come along to their camp, saying that it was "mauats katak,\*" not very far. We had enough food to get there, but not to come back on. I had no doubt whatever that the Indians would see us provided, but when I tried to explain that we wanted to be sure of supplies to come back with they seemed confused. I take it they could not imagine our asking such a question. It is certain that as invited guests they would have seen us provided, even if they ran short themselves in doing it. If we got delayed coming back it would not hurt us to miss a meal anyway. But after all we gave up going. In the end I told Ostinitsu that we had to catch a steamer, and so he told Mrs. Hubbard's party two or three days later on George River.

They had accepted the leg bones of the caribou, but left the meat for us. I doubt their

\*Mówats kah-tárk

caring much for the fresh meat as compared with the dry, but in any event they never neglect the marrowbones. In the mix of separating our things they left the bones after all, so we ran across a little neck and called to them. They took the bones with faces averted, Naskapi fashion, and drove away for the wide lake without a word. It was a poor parting from people who had been companionable and kind, no less helpful and interesting. Q. and I went back to our fire in silence, wet and tired, and not happy.

Ostinitsu had said that it would not rain much more, when I was discussing the difficulties of our going on, but he was never more mistaken, though to tell the truth I think he shaped his words to his wishes for once. However this may have been, a three days' norther set in, blowing up the narrows and across our slightly timbered point until our tent nearly flapped away. Occasionally the hills would whiten with snow, not to stay long, and again the fine rain would drive with the gusts. The backward eddying of the wind carried sparks against the hot front of the tent whenever our fire was near enough to be in any way worth having, and the burnt holes gradually increased our ventilation. The tent was Egyptian cotton, "balloon silk," which is strong, light, tight, and unabsorbent, but when hot catches fire like tinder. From a mere spark the burning spreads fast, with white smoke. It was a mean time, adding for me a memorable one to the cold, wretched northers and northeasters of a camping lifetime. One cooks little, eats cold, everything gets slinky, and the wet chill of the air gets into one's bones and disposition. If they lasted long enough one would



WHITE MOSS SLOPES WITH CARIBOU PATHS, MISTINIP



give up. No wonder that among all the Indians Death comes from the northeast.

For a time on the second forenoon the rain was only mist, though the wind held strong and cold. We went to a hill some way southwest and looked down into a pretty pond, with caribou roads on a fine moss slope beyond. This is the heart of the northeastern range of the deer, in all its subarctic perfection. Even in the thick, dark weather the hills and lakes held our eyes. We were the first there of our race. The region is perhaps the fair spot of all the Labrador peninsula. If it had been clear we should have gone farther and seen the actual escarpments of George River, at perhaps twenty-five miles distance as the raven flies.

From the narrows the lake opens broad to the west, and from the hills we were on one can see well toward the head of the main lake, say a dozen miles. There were ptarmigan in some broken ground near camp, gathered among some sheltering spruces. A strong rufous tint prevails in the young birds at this time, especially toward the head.

The third day the wind eased, and we danced across the lively narrows uneasily, stopping, heading up into the gusts, making a side move when we could; all with enough misgivings, for at any time a final blast from the wide lake might concentrate in the narrows to our grief. Once under the northern lee our way eastward was sheltered; then the sky brightened and by afternoon we were on smaller waters. At Hawk Lake the wind and a slight rain blew straight on shore from north; we had no choice but to stop. For an hour we wandered about the smooth glaciated

valleys to find some sheltered spot, enough of a lee for two men to get behind. Not a bush, not a rock was available. All uprising surfaces, great and small, were ground smooth and rounded, and the wind swept every one, no matter what way it faced. Giving up, we returned to the lake. A little crest of sand two feet high had been pushed up by ice, a slight *barricado*, vertical on the land side. Behind this we made a fire and cooked. When we sat up straight the wind and rain cut our ears, but half lying we were well sheltered. After supper we raked away the fire and made our bed where it had been, the only spot not reached by the wind. But the little rampart served, we kept close under its straight side, held from caving by a lacing of moss, and the rain blew on over us.

The night over, the weather turned warmer. We had forgotten the existence of flies, but all in an hour of sun they rose from the moss, active, numerous, and apparently keener of appetite from the cold spell. It is said that they are properly vegetarians, but none of these seemed to waste its time looking for anything but ourselves. As compared with the people of the country, however, they may well have regarded us as green things.

The lengthening portages toward the Assiwaban, wet as they were, taxed us a good deal; never have I drawn the reserve lower. The wind lake was calm, and without discussion we held on half the night to get it behind us; in a day, then, we were on the sea. Now came rowing. How Q. hated it! and longed for water where his great paddle would serve. Voisey was away, codfishing at House Harbor, and we pulled along. Un'sekat Island showed no signs of life and we held on by; seemingly all was adverse. But on turning south



from the Little Rattle who should meet us but Johnny Edmunds, in Voisey's long boat. We took possession, like buccaneers, turned him about, put the canoes aboard, and kept on for Fanny's. It was a forlorn hope, as steamer dates were, but there is always a chance as voyages go with the mailboat. But our keelless boat refused to beat, the broadside canoes took the wind and kept her falling off too much. So we turned in for House Harbor, ten miles east, a lucky stroke as it came out. It was dark when we got there, where we found John V. and his family in the little house which gives the place its name. Before we were up next morning there was a shout and we got out in time to see, with sinking feelings, the steamer going on up the run for Nain. Things looked doubtful; it was a dark, northeast day, thick, and the boat might come back far outside or run by us in the varying fog. We borrowed a flag from a schooner, put it up, and as afternoon came on watched the north for smoke. As luck would have it, she came back only two miles out and we saw her black cloud carried ahead by the wind some way before she was opposite. Our luggage was already aboard the trap boat. Leaving the canoes to Voisey, we put out, and the long trap's wonderful heels in a reach took us over in time. It was a narrow squeak then, for Captain Parsons, whom I could see clearly on the bridge, thought we were only fishermen to ask how were the fish "down along." The mate had seen our flag, but had not reported it. We saw that the steamer was going by without stopping. In great tension I jumped upon a thwart, bright in yellow oilskins, and motioned savagely to the bridge of the steamer to shut down steam. It was no fisherman's

gesture, and something came to Parsons; I saw him reach out and pull the lever. We were pretty near and broad off. They swung around into the wind in a long circle and we pulled over to them. Getting aboard in the uneasy water took quick work. About the first person I ran into was the Hon. Elihu Root, Secretary of State. Some one had asked him below if he was going up to see Mr. Cabot get on, to which he returned with casual interest, "Which is it, John or Sebastian?" He and his two sons, with Colonel Sanger, were making the trip of the coast.

We were pretty well reduced by our trip, not having taken time enough anywhere to freshen up, and the extra heavy loads and wet country, with indifferent nights, had taken our spring well away; aboard the steamer it was agreed we looked like picked chickens.

We had a good time to St. John's, gaining our pound a day on the boat, in accordance with custom, and were in good trim by the time we were there.



ASSIWABAN RIVER, FROM WEST OF HIGH PORTAGE



A MOSQUITO DAY. DR. HOWE IN 1910



## *Chapter VIII*

1906

THE season of 1906 was one of a good deal of knocking about for me both on the coast and inland. I went north alone, for a reason. It was partly that only an Indian would have served the purposes I had in mind, and, as usual, I was not sufficiently sure beforehand of being able to go at all to warrant engaging one ahead from one of the Gulf reserves. For the rest, a white companion, however pleasant and helpful it might be to have one, would be in some respects a disadvantage. I wanted to see something of the intimate life of the Indians, and it is hard to find white men who care for that sort of thing. Mainly, however, I had come to know that one can never really "sit in" with primitive people when white companions are along. Alone, one is easily taken into the group, there is always room for one new person, and the current of the life moves on. A white party, on the other hand, imposes its own atmosphere, and the visit comes to little more than a formal meeting between people of alien races.

Therefore, taking chances though it was, for a person alone is easily balked, I went north alone. There was not much to lose on the geographical side; during the three years preceding, the country along the height of land and the George had been pretty well developed, and offered little that would be new, and the adjacent districts would be not much different, certainly no better. The people now offered more than the country.

Some help would be necessary in any case, but I thought things would work out. My main reliance was the Indians themselves; one year and another they had urged me to come and go in with them. There was only the chance of their coming out too late in the season, and I thought I could count on my friends of the shore for at least enough help for a good start inland, when I could work along the familiar route alone. Sooner or later Indians would come along.

Naturally enough the working out of my plans proved rather a head-wind matter, just as when I was north alone in 1903, though the present venture came out well enough in the end. I had out of it no new exploration, a good deal of knocking about among old landmarks, some disappointments, some not very commonplace experiences; all in all it ended pretty well.

The voyage north was the usual thing that year. The usual shining bergs were grounded along the coast, the usual greater ones working along outside and in *ad libitum*. Fog, as usual, came and went. Schooners had increased in numbers; they were along everywhere in bunches and single. The ice-pack at Cape Harrigan was only a remnant, and we made through it to Fanny's Harbor at about the usual first-steamer date without having to stop. It was the 21st of July.

On board from Battle Harbor north were Dr. Townsend and Glover Allen, of Boston, studying the birds of the coast. During their run of the coast was gathered the material for Dr. Townsend's "Along the Labrador Coast." They named many of the sea birds I had known but not identified, the imposing glaucous gull, or burgomaster, among others. A grampus which leaped repeatedly off

Fanny's they named the white-headed whale. It cleared the water finely, as lightly as a minnow.

I wanted to get to Davis Inlet to get news of the Indians and to shape my course, and Captain Parsons, as of old, had offered to put me ashore at Newfoundland Harbor, some six miles across land from the Hudson's Bay Company post; but on going ashore at Fanny's to see the old place and people, I found that Guy, the Hudson's Bay Company agent, was there for mail with his sailboat, and fell quickly upon the opportunity to go over with him.

There must be something about the gray old Cape island, out to the sea, or perhaps the suggestive proximity of the Devil's Thumb out still farther, which upsets people's balance at Fanny's Harbor, and stimulates their imagination to the fathering of sea tales. Here was born Spracklin's story of my canoe voyage from Davis Inlet in the wild night storm, and now came another, based on my leaving the ship with a canoe. Not even that I was in the canoe, for I only pulled it along behind the ship's boat by a string and laid it up on the rocks. But imagination found something to lay hold of, for when I reached my own club in the fall I found that I had been seen leaving the steamer alone in a canoe forty miles from land!

Fish were again scarce with the Spracklins. Some of the old crew were there, Tom Poole among the rest, and the place was still Fanny's Harbor, but Ellen had fallen in matrimony, and the light of the place was dimmed accordingly.

Guy and I had a meal, gossiped at some length with the Spracklins, and were off for the post in a failing wind. Before it died, however, we were well past the heights of the cape, inside the Thumb,

and on behind the sheltering islands. At ten or eleven we were calmed at the foot of Davis Inlet run, with a tide coming out. There was a current notion of tying up and sleeping in the boat, among the mosquitoes, but I urged another form of punishment, which culminated in a back-breaking pull over the bar and to the post by midnight.

In this year, 1906, I at least had a good outfit. Whatever I tried to do that failed to turn out was not from shortcomings of this or that in my equipment. The canoe was laid out particularly for the ponds and windy portages of the barrens. It was fifteen feet long by about thirty-three inches wide and fifteen deep, and moderately flat. The ends, not to catch too much wind, were rather low. If these had been a little more run out she would have been faster and better about getting ahead in a short sea, but for this she took less side wind when being carried, a matter worth considering. A light person carrying a canoe has about as hard a time with wind as he would on the water, no matter how strong he is. This canoe was built by Robertson, at Riverside, and was the one which, in 1910, weighing only fifty-six pounds herself, carried about nine hundred pounds through the twenty lakes from George River to the Assiwaban, and this in her third season of service.

The gun was a double one, six pounds, twenty bore left and 38.55 right, giving sixteen hundred feet velocity. It was most convenient for picking up a living, besides taking apart easily and going readily into a pack bag out of the way and out of the rain. Moreover, it is worth something to be able to see through a gun from the breech, which one cannot do with many repeaters. What is more, a double gun is almost sure to be in order, one



side of it or the other, being in this as good as two guns, while repeaters generally balk sooner or later.

For the first time I had a round tent, of "balloon silk," weighing four pounds or so; a good shape to stand wind, and requiring only one pole.

A four by five inch folding camera, with a beautiful split Zeiss lens, was partly spoilt by an over-strong shutter, expensive at that, which took to going off hard and putting the light camera into convulsions when it did, though in ordinary snaps the lens was able to show something of its quality. I had a luxurious white Hudson's Bay Company blanket, a bit heavy, but taking little care. The best thing of all was an F. S. H. matchbox, of which more anon. Fire, when really needed, is all the world to one. Altogether the outfit was about as good as ever was, and not much to be bettered unless by bow-facing oars for salt-water work.

. . . . .

As already told, my objective was Indians. I had come back from the North the year before a good deal lighted with the pleasant association Quackenbush and I had had with the little party of them who had taken us over the height of land to Mistinipi and asked us to visit them. They were a people in the primitive hunter stage. Nowhere else, perhaps, was the like of these Indians to be found, a little group of a race high in personality, yet living substantially in the pre-Columbian age of the continent. If they had guns and kettles and knives, if they sold fur and bought new conveniences, these changed little the essential life. They knew no language but their own; they had plural wives; they lived wholly on meat and fish; they used no salt. The clothing and lodges

were mainly of skins. They lived under their own law, in their old faith unchanged.

They would be late coming out, it appeared, and after some casting about I turned to a part Indian known as Old Edward and his family of grown sons to get me inland. Whether, coming on the coast alone after what experience I had had, I deserved to find help at all may be doubted. Something hangs over the shore people in the matter of going inland, and this I had known. Old E.'s people were another sort, were bred to the Indian life and promised well, but there is still a tale to be told, as will appear later. Old E.'s father, a Scotch Cree, had drifted "across land," to this coast from Hudson's Bay, and married an Eskimo woman. But although E. was thus half Eskimo and quarter white he was brought up an Indian and had lived for many years about the Michikamau height of land where he was born. His sons were something more than half Indian. E. himself had his share of the indirectness common in light and dark race mixtures, though intelligent and of some personality. He was sixty-four years old and pretty well done with the trail himself. The whole family, nearly, were at Opetik above William Edmunds's. Two or three of the sons were married; the whole group must have counted twenty persons.

Race mixture, of course, gives various results, and in the Northeast there are few examples of the Indian-Eskimo strain. The only other one I have heard of was at Chimo, and the result of the combination was not for the best. The man in that case, however, was weak in constitution. But if the E. family are to be taken as a type it is to be hoped that either the two races will continue

on two sides of the fence, as at present, or go away somewhere until the new combination has had a few generations in which to get its bearings. As E. remarked, dubiously, when the matter of a trip came up, "They are pretty high strung for you." They were, as was shown by a handsome black eye E. had when I came along later. It appeared that one of the boys had been holding forth upon a plan of his for looting Davis Inlet post; the father remonstrated and said he ought not to talk that way, whereupon the young dutiful pitched in and left his mark. From the St. Lawrence to Chimo there is trouble wherever the older boys turn up, but this I did not know until too late.

It seemed that William Edmunds's was the place to go to, and George Lane and I worked our way up there in his boat, sailing, rowing, and sculling as shore trips generally go, and worrying for some time with wind tails from all ways in the usual place near Jim Lane's. We found Jim dismantling his house to move to Lane's Bay and take up his father's place there, where I found him later in the summer. The place had fallen to him as the oldest son. His father and mother, with a boy, had perished in a storm in the early spring. The snow leveled them over at the time, and it was only just as I came upon the coast that they were found; indeed it was George and I who carried this serious news to Jim.

At William's I was tied up two or three days by various kinds of weather, and my diary shows the drift of things:

"Lane went off this morning. Raining in showers, and delayed going up to Edward's, he is five miles above. A poor night, on the floor—mosquitoes, cats, dogs, the baby, and drip from

rain over the floor, in conspiracy. Fishing not good, and W. thinks he might like to go inland with me; should prefer one of the E.'s if possible to get one. William reports that the older Naskapi are going to Chimo, on Ungava Bay, that they go there to trade because they do not like the way of the post here. The E.'s get along well here, but do not like my old friend Cotter, now at Chimo; he knocked old E. down once for some cause, and Indians do not forget such things. It seems the Naskapi have thought I might be going to set up a trading post inland, and it rather appears I should have their trade. Some of the younger men are coming out here, but probably not before August 12th or so, so as to give the *Pelican* time to get in. This is too much time to lose, it is only July 24th now; I cannot see how to lay out my time.

"Clear to-night with northwest wind. The sea trout are holding out, also the fresh water trout that now and then come with them; these are known as 'hard head' trout here. Whitefish are coming in too, of about two pounds; are found in all the neighboring lakes. They are not quite up to the southern-slope ones, but sometimes they get large ones, the 'master fish,' which are better.

"W. says there is usually five or six feet of snow in the woods here in winter. He regards fall caribou skins as the best for snowshoes. A pair he had tightened when wet until they destroyed the bows.

"July 25. Northwest gale. Not worth while to fight my way around the point to E.'s. No salmon. By nine W. came in with fifteen or twenty trout of three pounds. While the fish are being cleaned the dogs sit in a row at a little distance,



MISTINIPI



THE WHITE MOSS HILLS, NEAR MISTINIPI



lined up like sprinters ready for the word, until all the fish are done and W. speaks, when they rush in and gulp the heads and other leavings.

"To-day I was alarmed for the two year old boy, who was actively kicking an old dog as he lay in the sun. The dog stood it awhile, then carefully put out a big paw and pushed the boy gently away without upsetting him. The dogs do not touch the low-hung whitefish drying outside the house, Mrs. E. said; the young ones may, but not the others, even if the family are away all day.

"W. says there are a good many wolves about in winter; what they get are mostly shot, some trapped. They are never dangerous, are 'slinkers.' Near Nain a few years ago they were passing for three days in swarms, 'like the deer.' They are larger in every way than his dogs, say one hundred pounds or more. He has seen one especially large track; his own foot just filled it. There are no fisher about, that he knows of.

"A great bear track (barren ground bear?) had been seen within a year between here and Nain, and more than once. Was ugly, knocked a tent down. I asked W. to save the skin complete if such a bear was killed. This bear story is to be taken with caution; any large bear track would be stimulating to the Eskimo imagination. W. shot at a seal just now — a very high miss.

"26th. W. and I started for E.'s on the tide, at 8.30. Stiff northwest wind. W., who started off a novice and sitting obstinately high, though the water was rough, was glad to get down on his knees after a little, as low as he could."

Old E. had his camp on the north side of the river (the Notaquanón), with three sons and their families not far away. He had heard of me, we

settled down comfortably, and he held forth: He thought one or two of the boys would like to go with me,— but they ought to have good pay. I was a wealthy man, and it would not matter to me how much I paid. I ought to pay whatever they asked. Was I really going into fur trading? The Naskapi had almost convinced themselves that I was looking up a place for a trading post. It would be better for me to set up on his river, the Notaquanón (“Place where you hunt porcupines”), rather than on theirs. Was I quite sure that I was not connected with the French company? I must be. How could a wealthy person like me, who could stay at home and live as he liked, come up into the flies and hard country unless he had something to make by it? No matter what I said as to this, the old man’s incredulous smile never quite disappeared. In truth, with the passing of his best years he felt the burden of his irresponsible family very seriously; it was no wonder that he could not take my vacation point of view. The Naskapi, he could tell me, were hardly the best sort of people. They were friends to your face, but not behind your back. They wanted the southern Indians to come and hunt with them, but they (E. considering himself one of them) did not care to. He needed a good canoe very much (after looking at mine). The company had not treated him well. They ought to bring a priest to the coast; it was a very bad thing that they would not.

Talk of the coast and people followed, and it appeared that few of the people were just as they should be. As to the southern Indians, who hunted beyond the river toward the George, they were an ungrateful lot. He, E., had killed a great



deal of meat and given it to them without asking anything, but they had no appreciation.

Yet the old fellow was pleasant to talk with. How he had kept his English so perfectly good is hard to see, for none of his family use it in a way worth mentioning. He had waded across the river and shot a fine black bear that day; we had a good meal of it. They had killed five among them lately, boys and all. Only the day before two of the smaller boys had come upon a polar bear swimming in the river, but did not dare to shoot it at. Indians in general are afraid of these bears. On the other hand, Eskimo, who are fearless with the white bear on almost any terms, are quite timid about the inoffensive black bear; in Eskimo eyes the shadow of the inland is upon all its creatures.

Trout and salmon nets were set in an eddy below the camp. A fine fifteen-pound fish came in while we were there and some large trout, up to seven pounds. They were living well, indeed, though without caribou. E. thought these were as numerous as ever inland, although they had not appeared for two years on his hunting grounds.

Talk went on starvation. E. had eaten wolverene and wolf, but would starve rather than eat mice. Hunger was hard to bear at first, then you got used to it. Eight days was the longest time he had starved; he had one partridge during the time. One could not stand it as well the second time. He and his daughter Agnes had come very low at some time lately; had fallen many times in getting to their cache.

He had been in the Hudson's Bay Company service before the posts were abandoned on the height of land, for eleven years voyaging the Ham-

ilton River. The trip to Michikamau took thirty-five days. He saw Cary and Cole after their walk from the Grand Falls after their canoe was burned, and had great respect for their feat of getting out whole.

His route inland follows the Notaquanon River about eighty miles, I should say, though he mentions it as one hundred and fifty; then a string of lakes takes them beyond the height of land.

William and I went back to his place toward evening, taking a boy, Matthew E., along to help me back next day. "Young Edward," a son of old E., also turned up at W.'s, and I talked with him about the routes. He preferred the Assiwaban route, as being easier, and said the boy would go too. This put me in a good way, and I finally arranged the pay matter on a fair basis.

"27th. At E.'s camp. All is arranged and I think we will get off in the morning. It is good primitive life here. It is good to be away from the dog-ridden shore. At the house last night it was close and hot, yet I had to cover up from the mosquitoes. Dogs howled, something smelt, and the cat took its night run-around. From a long jump it landed all fours on my stomach.

"To-day the women here at Edward's sewed a cunningly arranged Indian flap to the door of my round tent, set it up nicely, put in a bed of fresh boughs, and started a little fire of fragrant curlew-berry vines outside that sent a curl of smoke over to the flap, into the door, and around inside until the flies were all out. Their woman's touch is magic in these things, no less as to the things they cook."

By morning the family courage had fallen off. They feared to let the boys go; there was much

talk and many excuses. Matthew had no moc-casins, the pay was not enough. The trip came near being called off. We started at last. Mat-thew's mother looked very doubtful, and young E.'s wife held back from shaking hands with me at parting, but after this expression of feeling re-lented finally. "Don't starve them," said old E.

It was the 29th. Some of the younger boys helped us over a neck to the familiar old portage route where George and I went back and forth with so many loads in 1903. This time we knocked along easily. The boys preferred not to have me work, but I held to a fair pack. Rather soon young E. asked me if I had any whiskey. In the last pond, *Muku-wakau-mestuk* ("Only crooked trees"), there were a few sheldrakes. We camped at a little brook, the second camping place of George and myself. The path was not hard to trace now, for since 1903 few caribou had come through the valley to confuse the trail. There were scattering tracks, and one small bear track, but little visible life. Three Canada jays chortled about a pond and some ptarmigan were laughing along the brook at dark. The main stream we came up is called by the Indians Barren Ground River, as is the great George River beyond the height of land. At night came more mosquitoes, going far toward eating up the boys, who had only one piece of netting between them and could not keep it snug. They were sleepless and uneasy. I was better off, having a whole piece of netting to myself, but the closed tent was airless. I had put on some tar grease in the afternoon, but thought that even without it the enemy really liked the others best, though I was marked well under my shirt by black flies during the day. After midnight, alarmed lest

their tribulations drive my crew into the idea of giving up the trip, I spent two hours sewing a netting front into the door of the tent, and with more air and no flies the night finished out well.

The 30th was hot and thundery, with showers. I had a lesson about putting out fires, being the last to leave the luncheon place. Looking back from some way on, the haze down the valley seemed smoky, and the boys asked me if I had surely put out the fire, "put water on it." I had not, and as it was on naked ground and virtually out would have taken what chances there were, myself. Not so the Indians. Young E. ran back, quite a way, to make sure. Luckily he found the fire out. They were right in taking no risk.

Before long we departed from my old route and turned west two or three miles across a lake I had visited in 1903, but not traversed. A long portage to Side Brook, a short run upstream, and a portage across a lightly timbered plain brought us out on the Assiwaban some three or four miles above the falls. Luxurious travel this, and fast, for I went only once over the portages myself, and the boys were quick in bringing up the second load.

I had left my rod at William's, so made up a good-sized salmon fly to a short line and a dry stick, and in the twilight slapped — literally — the water for fish. In a short time I had ten, of about one and a half pounds. The big hook let nothing go. This night we slept. As on the night before, the aurora was fine, particularly in its showy latitudinal bands.

We made great time up river, shoving over the swift shallows with three paddles and using a towing line at only one place. It is notable that the Indians do not use the regular setting pole on

this river; possibly there is little poling done in this region anywhere.

A bear which swam the river in the afternoon, after the muskrat fashion of his kind, cost us a little wasted time looking for him in the bushes and we stopped on the wind lake near the outlet. We really ought to have kept on through the lake instead of camping, it was glassy calm; but the dark water and sky ahead looked so strangely shadowed and portentous, as if any sort of a down-pour and wind convulsion might break, that I respected the misgivings of the others, not to mention my own. But ominous as the outlook was nothing unusual occurred after all. Whether or not we had broken the weather rule — if so our sin was slight as things looked—a northwester kept us hopelessly windbound the next day. We climbed a high rock hill alongside the camp, a landmark from far down the river. My two young impudents made the occasion a race, beating me handily, both of them. Coming down they tried the same game, but this was not so bad. Young E. and I reached camp together, with Matthew well behind. Later we fell to making maps on the sand, a hundred feet long, and discussed the country beyond.

By morning the wind eased and things were better. I stirred the camp out at three, and we reached the upper part of the lake on calm water. Turning across from the high southern cliffs to the north side the wind came down again from the great gap, the sea rose fast. We were all anxious before we got over. The distance across the lake looks short, but is deceptive. We paddled like devils, but the high north wall moved away as we went. Toward the last some water came in, not

much, but in that worst of wind-funnels anything might happen; we were thankful to get over. Then came a hard, wet dance getting up the shore, just such as Q. and I had had the year before; as then, we hung close to the rocks, slopping about in their backwash for miles. Young E. was unhappy; he had been moody ever since we reached the lake. The place is bad enough anyway, and to a person brought up in fear of rock demons and the underwater people, it is easily no place to be in when wind is abroad. At the time I did not know much about these ruling powers of the place, and considered E. merely water timid, which with all allowance he doubtless was. It is fair to say that he somewhat distrusted the very light and well-burdened canoe.

Once out of the lake we made the five miles to the forks and camped in the old spot, where the kettle stick of Q. and myself was still in place over the ashes we had left. On the way we watched a bear, high up on the side of the valley; we could have gone up and shot him, almost surely, but the bushes were too wet to be pleasant, and as he soon disappeared over the high level, a long climb, we did not follow.

Showers followed until night; the men left my sleeping things out, and with wet trousers and a wet blanket I slept cold, as did E. too. The hardbread gave out, an inconvenient matter here, and we had to take up flour; it developed that E. did not know how to cook it.

An episode of the next day, August 2, changed the face of my affairs suddenly, to the extent of putting back my visit to the high barrens for a month. As we put out from the eddy into the stream a vicious gust rocked the canoe, and E.



NAHPAYO, PAKUUNNOH, AH-PE-WAT, 1906



FROM THE HIGH PORTAGE





urged that it was too windy to go. Such a thing as being windbound on a small running river was a new idea to me, and I held him to it awhile accordingly. He had been timid about wind throughout; I had reflected often upon the comparative dash of the Naskapi. We worked along slowly a half mile, keeping close to the bank out of the current, when E. complained that it was too hard, and we landed for a time, watching the wind and making sand maps. After an hour of this E. proposed that we abandon the river and take the Indian land trail from the forks; he said he could neither paddle nor pole, he was used up. I consented, and we dropped back. From the forks the two started ahead with packs while I waited to come in on the second turn, and while they were gone I thought things over. The new plan seemed doubtful. We could be windbound on the barrens as well as on the water. With the double portaging necessary it would take forty or fifty miles of walking to get even as far as the high portage, and much more time than by water. When the two came back I spoke of the matter, and E., who now protested that he was "âkushu," sick, said that he did not intend to go to George River anyway. We were now taking the chance of missing the Naskapi on the river, for they come out that way, besides, if not so important, of seeing no new country. I said that if he was not going to Tshinutivish I preferred to keep the river, and we would better bring the packs back. I offered to pole up the river slowly, and let him walk the bank; and he being not well I would go up the hill and bring back his pack myself. Not much was said, and I started off for the packs with the boy, leaving young E. to get luncheon. I returned

slowly, to give time for the cooking, letting the boy reach camp some time ahead. When I got back nothing had been done toward luncheon, and E. was evidently in a rage. He announced that he was going home at once. Talk followed; but the amount of it was, on his part, that he demanded to be taken home in the canoe. He would have gone to Tshinutivish by the hill, he said, if I had kept to that route; he was not sick except for paddling and poling. Now he was going home afoot anyway. I offered to go over the hill if he must, but he wouldn't now. I urged him to stay until morning, then we would talk it over and do the best thing. I insisted that they take provisions, pointing out that I couldn't possibly use what I had. I offered to take them across the river in the canoe — we were between the forks — if they must go. Everything I urged only made him worse. If I had asked him not to knock his head against a rock it seemed as if he would have gone and done it at once. At the shore I learned, later, that he was known by these blind rages, which would last some hours. After they were over he would be ashamed and apologetic.

We were at it with signs, questions, bad Indian speech and English on my part,— signs, strong talk, and hopping about and good Indian on his. Any white man as mad as he would have done something; any traveler in the presence of such a manifestation as E.'s would have kept his feet under him and stayed between the Indian and the gun as I did. E. would have been nothing to deal with at arm's length, but strong, quick little Matthew would have made himself felt somehow.

At last, while I was looking into my dictionary for words to go on with they started away, and

when I looked up again to speak they were some way off disappearing among the trees. They had five or six rations of eatables which I had pressed upon them, that amount being at hand in a bag we had intended to leave at the forks as a cache.

Things had gone pretty fast, and I sat for an hour on the river bank, elbows on knees and chin in hands. It was not too obvious what to do. The Indians should come along in five or six days, perhaps sooner; they passed the forks at just this time the year before. There was not much point in going on alone; it would be hard and slow, and even if I met the Indians would involve ten or twelve days of solitude, while their companionability after seeing the E.'s at the shore would be unsafe to depend on. Old E. had shown disapproval when I spoke of wanting to see the Naskapi, losing no chance to depreciate them, and lately I had had an impression that the young men too did not want me to meet them. They were safe to make all the trouble they could. Finally I decided to go back to the post, get my mail, and if circumstances allowed, to come back inland with the Indians. In an hour or two I had a rowing frame and oars roughed out against need in getting through the lakes if they were windy, got the tent up handily, the stakes being already in, and turned in later as the moon rose. The canoe I put close outside the tent, though there was little chance of the deserters trying to take it. Once in a while through the night I looked out, but the boat was always there in the moonlight.

My idea of the situation was that E. was homesick, timid, and out of tune with the enterprise when we arrived at the forks. Yet he might not have let himself get out of hand as he did if a new

circumstance had not been added. This was the discovery that caribou were moving in the country beyond. They had noted, what missed me, that there were deer hairs washed up along the banks of the river, shed while the animals were crossing the stream above. At midsummer the winter hair is falling off, and sometimes washes up in quantity along the shores, as Mrs. Hubbard found it the year before on the upper George while the great migration was passing. Besides, there were deer tracks on the hill where Matthew and I had gone for the packs. The boy went cautiously on from the packs to the crest of the ridge and looked long over the barrens, saying "Ah'tif,"\* "Scattering deer about." Now the southern Indians had had no deer for two years, and were shortened for meat as well as skins for clothes, lodges, and snowshoes. The men must get back, make canoes and get their outfits, and go with their families to their hunting grounds.

The boy had reached camp first and reported, while I rested along by the way, not caring to get in before luncheon was ready, and by the time I came in E. was worked up to his uncontrollable stage. If we had been able to talk freely together things would have come out better. As it was, but for E.'s peculiarity of temper the breakup would hardly have occurred. Still, I doubt his going far in any case. My notion of keeping to the river on account of meeting the northern Indians was justified, for they came down the very next day, close behind me.

At three in the morning I turned out, and in an hour was off. Then followed one of those days when the homing instinct is free and opportunity serves. I am not sure that I made a wise expendi-

\*Ah-teéf.

ture of strength that day, for there was no real need of pushing, but save for a few moments the canoe moved steadily until six o'clock — fourteen hours. In front of me on a pack was a cup, some dry pea-meal ration, a pipe, tobacco, and matches. The morning was calm and fine. On a point in the wind lake I landed long enough to take aboard a stick or two for rigging a sail, but kept on by paddle, swinging away as the hours went and losing few strokes through the day. At the foot of the Natua-ashish I pitched the unused oars and frame sticks into the bushes, where we found them in 1910. Save at that place I did not stop. It cost only the time of a stroke to light a match, or take a swallow of water or a mouthful to eat, and so the day went. Wind came strong ahead the last miles to the falls, and I had to use strength, but kept moving. At six, by the sun, I was at the portage. I had not hurried, but fourteen hours of continuous paddling is a long shift. It had been good weather for traveling, and I had in mind the feebleness of a single paddle when weather goes wrong. But by keeping the rule of using good weather as it passes I had missed the Indians, and perhaps a moral lies here.

I boiled the kettle above the falls and meant to camp, but after supper the call of the trail was not spent and I took a pack over the portage, then another, then the canoe. When I picked up the fourth load it was getting dark and beginning to rain. By the time I had dropped down river two or three miles almost utter darkness set in and a breeze came from ahead with real rain. Then, remarking to the place generally, for we all talk a little when alone on the trail, "This is not traveling weather,"— I turned over the canoe on a

tolerable mossy shelf, boiled a final kettle, and slept as I could. It was toward midnight. I had tucked away some fifty miles, including the portaging.

At five I was off again, keen to be over the wider waters before wind should rise, and I was none too soon. Following the rain a strong northwester was pushing down, and I drove straight north across the bay to meet it, so as to have the weather gage on a long point east. By the time the water whitened up I had offing enough, came about, and danced down for Voisey's with hands full to keep from broaching to as the balky canoe yawed to right and left. There is a curious flat rock or shoal somewhere toward Voisey's, under water. The tide was coming up and the wind going down, in such balance that once over the shoal I could not go forward or back, and felt curiously helpless. I was afraid of being pitched out, but managed to work off sideways and get to going again. The place amounts to a trap.

Sitting near the end of a light canoe there is always some chance of being jumped overboard in broken water, and besides, even when one is rowing, there is the possibility of being caught broadside by a gust as the canoe shoots out upon the wave and blown actually out of water. About high shores, when squalls are strong, this might well happen. A compliment to a good steersman in the North is, "He can't be thrown out," but this relates chiefly to running rapids.

The last run, through the backwash of the steep point outside Voisey's house, was as much of a jumping matter as I remember, but the canoe blew on through to shallow water behind the point and I hopped overboard without harm from the

boulders. It was no joke to get the canoe from the water to the lee of a large boulder near, in the strong wind. I tried many times before succeeding.

Voisey was just ready to start off somewhere with his family, but was willing to help me. This was a narrow escape from having to work my own way down the coast without oars. If I had been twenty minutes later in getting out of camp in the morning I should have been windbound, and he would have been gone. He was only waiting for the wind to let down. The moral as to using one's weather was peculiarly easy to draw that year, for we rarely had more than one day of calm at a time, and bad weather held on longer than good.

The wind blew down rather quickly, and Voisey handed me over to the Un'sekat people that night. There were several strange Eskimo there with the Noahs. The little house had been enlarged on one side, but there were eleven of us, with a going cook stove. It was very warm weather, and the place was well battened against flies. I was politely given a place next the wall and room to stretch out in, the others lying more or less across one another. Of close places I have known it was one of the least to be recommended. We had about ninety cubic feet of air apiece. Some one remarked in the morning that it had been "warm" in there.

Antone and a young friend named Poy took me down to the post. Poy, otherwise Boaz, was the best hunter in Nain, and withal rather shy and hard to photograph. I was to meet him once again that year after a more serious experience.

Wind failed and we opened Daniel's winter house for the night, where mosquitoes were as

thick inside as out. At seven on the 6th we were at the post, and I told my tale. Guy said the E. boys were a lot of crooks anyway.

Rather early on the 7th in came old and young E. and their families and six Naskapi. Three of the latter were old acquaintances, Ostinitsu, Nahpayo, and Pakuunnoh, and the other three I knew also from 1903. The younger men were extremely friendly, asking, "*Now* will you go with us?" I could not be sure until I had seen my mail.

Old Ostinitsu looked more thoughtful. E. would naturally have told him our tale. The latter tried to put on severity and insisted that I had compelled the boys to leave me. Their story was that I had threatened them and driven them from camp without food, Matthew being nearly barefoot; if they had not been able to go to one of their winter places they might have starved; I did not know how to travel, and insisted on going the wrong way. Of course young E. insisted this was the truth, but in time things eased off. There was not much for me to do unless with my knuckles. The first time I had to pass some of the really nice E. women, who had done me so well at their camp. I hated to do it, expecting them to look scissors at least. To my surprise, and I must say relief, they had a demure look of something near approval. The truth was that they had all been well scared for fear of consequences, and the wives doubtless needed no light on their husbands' characters. It might have been better in the long run if I had taken steps against them, or at least threatened them into a proper state of mind. But I could not look for any support from the Hudson's Bay Company, rather the contrary, and a magistrate would be far to seek. I kept a fairly stiff face.





ABRAM AND GEORGE LANE



SAM BROMFIELD WITH SALMON, 1906



I had rather a good time for a few days with the other Indians, who seemed to think that the E.'s had come out rather small. Nahpáyo asked me if I came through the Natua-ashu alone, making signs of paddling, and all looked impressed. They themselves would not care to; it is when alone that one has decidedly to fear the demons of such places. Napao told me of his father, Katshiuas, whom I knew in 1903, and said he was well. In the spring he had told Guy that he thought his father must have starved, as he had not heard from him for some time.

On the wharf scales, which I think weigh light, Na'pao stood at one hundred and forty pounds. He had grown to be a handsome fellow the last year. All his party looked well, a matter of deer supply. Pakuunnoh weighed one hundred and fifty-two, and a younger man one hundred and fifty-four. We all showed off with the fish weights, at which some of the younger shore people outdid the Indians and appeared rather well, and even I came off not so ill, for of course they were all unused to these putting-up trials. The Naskapi are not heavily muscled, though everlasting on the trail. After the show was over I reached up to the top of the weighing frame, pulled myself up with one arm and walked off. Looking back I saw Nahpáyo go up slyly and try it himself. I caught his eye, shook my head slightly, and he looked a bit sheepish as he failed.

The steamer came in on the 9th, and the Indians were off within a day. Toward the last the Indians' disposition to help me along fell off. Earlier, Nahpayo had told Guy that I was going up with them. They were disappointed that I was not going to set up a trading post, for I had told

E., with a certain impolicy, that I was only out to see things, and the old man could not pass by an opportunity for making himself felt. He was interpreter for the Naskapi, there were some relationships among the wives, and though they cared little for him personally, in matters of white man against Indian they would take his side. Moreover, my power of communication with them was too limited to be effective at such a time. Old E. was not so bad; we had a talk in which he said the boys were sorry for what they had done and would like to make it up. Ostinitsu, too, civilly told me where their camp was, at the narrows of Mistinipi. But they all fell away at the last, and an Indian says no disagreeably. Nor was old E. then sympathetic over the results of his genius for making trouble. His part had been plain to predict. As a friend of mine among the shore people said afterward, "About all the rows along here come from old E."

It never rains but it pours. Added to other things I had had no mail by the steamer. "Bad news travels fast" was my only consolation. For a time I was at the post, then Guy and I went over to Lane's Bay to visit Sam Bromfield. Meanwhile I picked up odds and ends from the people about. Discussing Eskimo, Mrs. Dicker, long intimate with the coast, said they were more keen than Indians to get whiskey and told of their shooting through a house from outside when drunk. This was near Rigolet. Three Eskimo there had some gin, got to fighting in a boat, and all were drowned. They were worse than Indians when drinking. She agreed that the E. boys would be a dangerous lot if they had drink; and old E. himself said the same. The E.'s get some effect

from spruce beer. It is surprising how a mere trace of alcohol affects such people, people whose race has never had it. Mrs. D. hadn't much fancy for Eskimo women, but respected those of the Indians. The women of the E. family certainly seemed good people.

Guy and I had a stiff time getting to Sam Bromfield's. At the point of the bay the swell and sea from north piled up against the outgoing tide in a heavy, broken "lop." The boat, though low, would have done well enough reefed down, but Guy was not a reefer. If I wanted to see the "thing that couldn't be done" on salt water, I should get into a boat with Guy and Spracklin. This time I was cold, which is not good for one's serenity at such times. It was a savage, cold, rainy afternoon. The storm brought in many gulls; thousands of kittiwakes—"ticklers"—went with us for hours, often close about. Their white droppings were like a beginning snowstorm, hitting the boat thirty or forty times, nor did we ourselves wholly escape. Yagers, sharp winged and swallow built, the "bo'suns" of fishermen and *hens* of the French, attacked fiercely the larger gulls, which were glad to abandon their sea pickings. These hunter gulls, as graceful as fierce, were black above, with white breasts and a black bar across the neck.

Sam had a very presentable family. We all talked endlessly the first evening, Sam in the lead. The old violin and the new violin, the graphophone and the talk went on long into the night. For the rest of the week I was there we were steady enough, but Sam's first fizz is of high pressure, the fun is good anyway, and there is nothing for it but to turn in and join.

I had thought of bringing a graphophone that year, for a novelty, but it would have been coals to Newcastle indeed. There were no less than seven from this bay to Shung-ho, just above Davis Inlet, and most of the talk along was of new records, chiefly vaudeville songs and smart dialogue. Sam had \$100 worth of records, yet some of these people had hardly enough to eat in winter. I could not blame them much. They were only part Eskimo, and blood of the gay world was in them all. Moreover, the bay life was not what it had formerly been. The trees had been burnt, deer no longer swarmed from the interior, the old superabundance of sea and shore game had fallen away; in summer the waters were swept by schooners from south. The life had been good while it was easy; now that it was harder the things of the outer world brightened to them, and it was not strange that the ragtime tunes gave them more of a lift than the more serious music.

The speech here is, I suppose, Devonshire. Mrs. B. said, recounting a punishing trip of the family from the post the week before, "By the time we had *he* (Sam) there it would have been dark" (if the wind had failed). All use the nominative thus, and the objective is reversed in the same way, as in the classic example of certain children regarding their supposed mother, "Her don't belong to we. Us don't belong to she."

With dogs about the house and too many mosquitoes, I netted windows and stopped holes smartly, as I did in most houses before settling down — to little result save for getting the netted windows open for air. Thorough killings in the evening did only passing good. In the end I won

by banking the underpinning with sand. They had been coming in from below.

Sam talked of the coast northward. The Nachvack Eskimo buried their more important people high upon a rock slope, walling them in and putting stone slabs across. All personal possessions were put alongside, kayak, utensils, clothes, and the needles and special things of the women. "What a pity to put a fine kayak there!" said Sam. Everything is damaged beyond use before leaving. Guns are put out of gear, and pots have holes knocked in them. Even now the older men put meat on the graves, and other observances survive. On killing seal the tip of the heart and liver are thrown into the water. Jim Lane, who used to hunt at Ungava, still does it "for luck." Anywhere along the bays an offering in time of storm or for hunting luck is well regarded. The Moravians, after a hundred and forty years of striving, say they do not hope to suppress these ideas.

During the whale hunt about Nachvack the women and children must remain silent and motionless while the men are out. On one occasion a mouse ran across the floor, a child ran after it, and the whale of course was lost.

Sam took me to his salmon net, some eight miles up. After the blow he expected twenty fish, but there were only two, besides one of "pele" size, four pounds, and a large red sucker. The schooners had cut the fish off outside. Their cod traps have reduced his catch to a tenth of what it used to be. Climbing "Summer House Hill" I could see lakes running north on the main stream, called Hunt's River, also "Grassy Lakes," off west and south toward Hopedale, with a waste of burnt

country west. There had been quite an area of light, straight spruce about this bay, chiefly black spruce, but some tall white ones. We saw only one seal.

Nearby is a very old Eskimo camp site, once just above tide on the narrowing bay, but now, by the gradual elevation of the coast, above a high bank where no Eskimo would think of camping, even if the present shallow river offered anything to camp there for.

The summer house was the usual small box with a place for fire. When Sam turned in he wrapped his neck up well. There was a weasel about, he said, and he had heard they would cut one's throat sometimes.

He discussed "fair play." An Eskimo had brought a silver foxskin to Hopedale and was offered \$60 for it. He could get a good deal more at Davis Inlet and begged hard to be allowed to sell it there. But he was not allowed to, under penalty of being cut off from all store privileges. Sam wondered if this was not "unchristian."

I reminded him that the missions buy low but sell low. They lost largely on an accumulation of silvers not long ago, and have resorted to paying the hunter something down, about half, I think, then selling the skin in London for the best price possible and paying the balance afterward. At Nain, S. told, they had twenty-five silvers the last year. He shot one in front of his house not long ago, firing twenty-two shots. It brought \$180, certainly good pay for his ammunition. He has caught thirty or forty at one time or another, getting four one year.

Sam's ethics of trade are not common. One year he sold young E. a dog. E. was offering



eight or ten dollars for a dog, but Sam said this one was worth only four dollars, and refused to take more. So with his son Abram, who sold Easton, traveling with Wallace, in 1905, a beautiful ranger seal sleeping bag for six dollars. Easton offered more, but A. knew that a dollar a skin was the proper price and would take only that.

But Sam was rather bitter about the low prices the Hudson's Bay Company has paid in the past, and said they would be doing no better now if the competition of the French company did not compel them to. It is hard for the people to see the high prices paid at Hamilton Inlet, where there is competition, compared with what they get here. All regard a new trader, such as the French company, as a mere deliverer. But new traders begin high, to get the trade, and I fancy the tale of overreaching would be the same in the end. Moreover, the traders sometimes pay too much. One year an incompetent fur buyer paid absurdly high prices—he must have lost heavily for his principals—and I found the next year that furs were being held in the bays for his promised return. Meanwhile his prices were taken as throwing light upon the practices of established dealers. Expectations for the future were high. The non-appearance of this trader relieved the situation after a time. The rapidly ascending prices of recent years have given a bad look to even perfectly fair ones of the earlier period.

But the doubts of the people are not without a basis. Fair play is not too common where the sharpened organization of the world comes in contact with the isolated hunter. Trade makes when it can, as much as it can, and the helpless are exploited. At any rate Sam, living to his prin-

ciples as with young E. and Easton, had a right to speak. He had indeed to be wideawake not to sell his foxes too low, now that his fishing grounds were being cut off by the cod men.

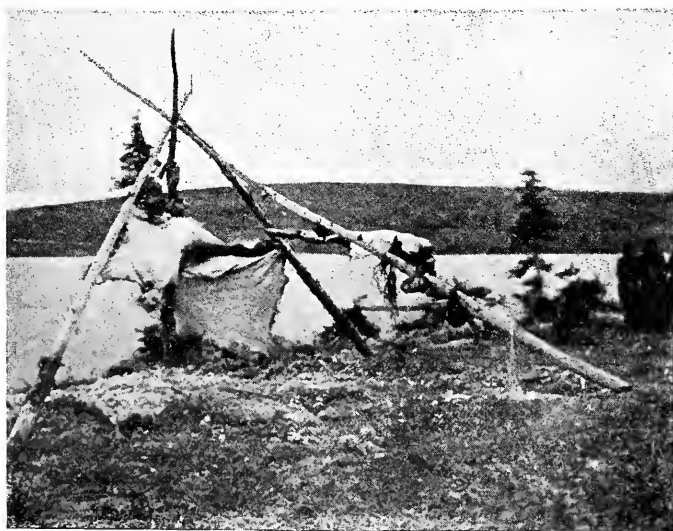
The salmon net was absolutely empty the morning after we arrived, and we dropped down to Jim Lane's by luncheon time. Jim's trout, caught in fresh water, are even better than those outside in the bay, combining the good qualities of both the fresh and salt-water fish. Jim's small boy was about the age of mine, and with his very way.

There was wolf and deer talk in the evening. Sam told about a deer chase he and Abram had, using a kometik and dogs. They "brown" them in the bunch with their repeating rifles while the sled is going. A large stag slowed up as the sled came on, as if to save getting out of breath, stood erect on his haunches, and held his two fore hoofs upright, then clapped them together with great force and sound. His nostrils opened and he blew jets of steam into the cold air with great fury. Holding his large split hoofs upright he snapped the halves together with a loud cracking. At the demonstration the leading dog shied off; the second leader jumped for the stag, and by a blow from one hoof was laid out motionless. The other hoof had followed, for the deer struck right and left, but the second blow missed because the dog was already down. The team stood off after that. In this manner, say the hunters, the old stags kill wolves. A Cree hunter has told me of having a woodland caribou he was chasing stop in the same way in time to tread down the snow around him and have room in which to fight.

On a time, one of Sam's tales went, wolves howled at him all one night near his place. In the



ENOUGH FOR A CACHE



HAIR SKINS DRYING, MISTINIPI, 1906



morning he disabled one, whereupon the other approached him behind. Thinking the place was "alive with them" he did not shoot the second one, but shouted until it went away. Later, when he found that there had been only two, he followed and finished the first one, much chagrined at losing the other.

At another time William Flowers, living in the next bay, had also a little experience. He saw fifteen or twenty wolves on the ice and struck off another way among trees to avoid them. Soon he ran into more wolves, who made for him instantly. The first lot heard the uproar and came too. There may have been thirty or forty altogether. He killed three and disabled a good many more before they left. Flowers, a very steady person, owned to being too scared to do good shooting. He doubted their knowing he was a man at first sight, taking him, rather, among the trees, for a deer.

Somewhere along the shore "a bunch of women" were in a tent while the men were hunting. A child was outside and a wolf made for it, whereupon the women yelled until he went off. The men did not believe the story, but the women would not sleep that night. Before morning the wolf came, ripped the tent, and was shot. He was an immense old wolf, with no back teeth.

A sort of Red Riding Hood tale came later from Spracklin. His girls, one year, complained of being followed about by three dogs, which they had to keep off by throwing stones. It was thought that they belonged to old John Lane. At one time the men chased them under the landing stage and punished them with stones. When at last Lane came over from his bay he said they

were wolves; he trapped them that winter in the flat west of the harbor.

Spracklin, who liked his milk, always brought along a nanny goat from home on his schooner; it picked up its living about the station. One day there was a disturbance outside and the goat was found in the ring with one of the large foxes of the region, the goat butting with spirit and the fox dancing about to get a nip.

The weather settled warm, with fine aurora on clear nights. The first Sunday Abram and I walked to George Lane's little house, two miles east. On the way a shrike was having a sparring match in the air with two smaller birds, some two hundred feet up in the air. The little birds were as ready to attack as the shrike; it was hard to tell which started the trouble.

Abram told me of an experience taking seven southern Indians to Hopedale with his dogs. They wanted him to go a way he did not want to take, an unusual route, which he refused to do. One of them took hold of him, showed anger, and was unpleasant. Upon this, A. called back his fifteen powerful dogs, who came bounding in eager for the fray. It must have been a stirring sight. The Indians, who had no guns, accepted his views with marvelous promptness, and were always civil to him after that. Some of my friends the E.'s were in the group.

"August 20. To net with Sam. He had twenty-five trout and a pele, the trout not large. Net set in form of a little cod trap. Fish nearly all dead, as they were not taken out yesterday, Sunday. Net bunged up with fuzzy weed; it is hard to keep them clear as late in the season as

this. Sam got a switchy stick and worked a long time beating the stuff off.

"A fine raised beach east of the trout net, one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five feet above present sea level. Jim Lane's memory indicates two feet rise here in forty years. This would put the Eskimo camp site near summer house at least three hundred years back, which agrees with the age of the implements there."

A cloud of lance, eel-like fish four or five inches long, were held in the little trout trap, keeping in a school, and absurdly enough not daring to go out through the two-inch meshes. Finally they settled to the bottom in despair, regardless not only of the big meshes, but of the opportunity offered by two four-foot openings.

These fish behave very little like a salmon, one of which had gone through the trap like a shot, leaving a hole almost the size of a stovepipe. A trout weighing eleven pounds, however, stayed in. This trout was twenty-nine inches long and fifteen and seven eighths in girth. All fish grow large here. In October cod of sixty or seventy-five pounds are caught in shallow water on the bar near the house.

Hereabouts a pine grosbeak is a "mope," a shrike a "jay killer" or "shreek." "The prettiest bird is what we call a fly-catcher, small, with yellow, white, and changeable blue, a little black cap on the head."

Sam asked me one day if the water in the interior was all salt, as he had always heard. He told me that the term Great Grampus was a loose one, the proper name of this monster of the waters being Ó-mi-oo-áh-lik (boat wrecker). It lives

in Ungava Pond, where the waves are always mountainous. One cannot see across it.

How strange people are! Here they were, the shore folk, taking the savage coast and shifting ice, the hunting of the white bear and walrus, and the dealings with the great sea itself, as all in the day's work, yet investing the innocent white moss and lake country behind with their most unheard of imaginings. It was a foregone conclusion that when I asked A. if he wanted to go inland with me after the mailboat came, his parents should decide that he could not be spared.

The bay people like summer, and none the less for its shortness, but their real life is the winter life. The narratives are almost all of winter, of hunts and storms and journeys; and all revolve around the dogs. Only with his dogs and when out with his dogs is the Labrador man in his glory, whether he be white, mixed, or Eskimo. "Without our dogs we might as well be dead," has been said to me by more than one. With the dogs they can bring their wood, haul their seals, drive to the far ice edge and away before the pack swings free. Inland for deer they go, near to the height of land, out again with meat, off to the trading posts. In summer the people are bound to the fishing, and the dogs range about the shore, or are left on islands when fish are to be taken to market or some journey for supplies made in the uncertain winds; but in the long winter the people and dogs are inseparable. Along the coast they go in the low sun and the keen air, whirling over the great white spaces among the islands, across the wooded necks and lakes, down into the bays and on. At the houses they dash up and stop, strong, cheerful Eskimo from Ramah and Nach-





A RAISED BEACH



vack in the north to Hopedale and Aillik and Mokkovik in the south, visiting and eating and passing on,—mainly, if one may say, for the joy of the road. Forty, fifty, a hundred miles a day they go when all is well, on under the high winter moon and the northern lights to their snowhouse inn.

Sam could not bear that I should leave the coast without seeing dogs in harness, and one day he drove them to the sled on the level ground. It did not go well. Eagerly they bounded off only to foul their traces among snags and bushes. The distress and yells of the uncomprehending leader were pathetic. It would not do, but I caught their spirit. The dogs are as keen as their drivers. The joy of the winter way to them all!

It is not for me, seeing these dogs only in summer, to say where their undoubted quality of devotion ends and the fierceness of their wolf inheritance takes on. These dogs of Bromfield's, and I have seen the like in others, would follow along the shore as we rowed to the net with all the appearance of our home dogs that cannot bear to be left behind, and in spite of our threatenings. I do not think it was the sculpins and rock cod they had in mind; they would get all they wanted, or all there were, anyway.

Those dogs of Sam's were surely good dogs. A fine old white one, perhaps the "master dog," would sit long at A.'s feet on the beach and look into his eyes as only one's own dog ever looks, one's own dog.

Yet that was the year of an occurrence, the Lane tragedy, in which dogs showed another character. It happened at Easter. Old John Lane, his wife, and grandson, going to the festivi-

ties at Hopedale in a great snowstorm, never arrived. They were last seen by a sledge driver, who drove off ahead of them, not on the ice, but on some land portion of the route. In a few days the dogs came home and were put into confinement pending further knowledge of what had occurred. Nothing more was actually known until just as I came up on the coast. A good deal of search had been made, but the snow had leveled everything over. When found at last the woman and boy were in the covered kometik untouched by the dogs, but of old John Lane only the scattered bones were left. It was probable that he had fallen in the deep snow and could not rise, but it was the opinion of those most used to the life that his dogs would not have touched him while he was alive. The dogs were killed upon the finding of the party, as is always done under such circumstances.

The question of hunger entered in, as the dogs may have stayed about until they were in straits. Here develops a curious trait of the Eskimo dog, though well known, apparently, in the region. Contrary to what one would expect, it is not dogs that are kept underfed that are most likely to attack persons, but the reverse. Not hunger, but the instinct of the chase in a strong, vigorous animal seems to be the mainspring. An animal heavily fed and gorged would doubtless be dull for a time, but a general high state is counted dangerous. It is the sporting instinct that is to be feared, the instinct of the fox hunter.

Another fact in this connection long puzzled me. It appeared that dogs were more apt to be dangerous in "thick" weather, in times of falling snow, and when it is stormy and dark. In

the end it occurred to me that as this did not seem to relate to anything in the human association it might go back to their original wolf period, and I asked the old hunters if the wolves hunted at such times. It seemed unlikely. We have all heard of the "truce of danger" among the animals, how the fiercest of them are mild in the presence of tumult and danger. But it appeared that wolves did hunt at such times, and particularly that deer killed by them were often found after the great storms. The old wolf instincts still wake the dogs to the chase when such weather comes on.

The reason for their hunting caribou at such times seems plain. We who have hunted them in the woods of Maine and Canada know how extraordinarily passive and approachable they are in snowstorms. They allow one to come very near and are reluctant to go far when disturbed. Doubtless they feel that as their tracks are covered in they are secure, for all deer are chiefly concerned about their back track. Obviously they are a good deal hidden in snowstorms. In bright, breezy days almost all birds and animals are astonishingly harder to approach than in dull weather.

Jim Lane had taken up his father's place. I talked with him and various other members of the family about the circumstances of the old people's last journey. Those who remained at home that night told me some things I wish I had written down; at the time it seemed as if I could not well forget them. Their accounts were not very different from some others that have been told in the world at one time or another. Their father, I think, appeared, and they both saw and heard. The dogs also were affected.

As mailboat time approached, I made an arrangement with a neighbor to take me over to Fanny's when the weather permitted. The first calm morning his boat appeared coming up the bay, and as a matter of course I left the boat I was in and got on. We made a quiet trip to Fanny's, with lightish winds, almost faint, before I found out that he had not been coming for me at all, but was only going to Jim's. He regarded the day as too rough.

The week at Bromfield's had been a peaceful rest. The family are uncommonly pleasant to visit. But I was chewing a rather bitter cud, nevertheless, unreconciled to leaving the country without a visit to the barrens, and if possible the Indians. If I left as things were the miserable story of the E.'s would follow me over the peninsula from side to side, and no lodge would be open to me. The picture grew in my mind of sitting on a rock with old Ostinitsu, having got to his camp in some way, and hammering the truth into him. To go alone would hardly do. I remembered the Eskimo Aaron at Nain, who spoke English and had been about the world; he had been willing to go inland with me at one time. If home news justified I could go north to Nain on the mailboat and look for him. It would be better in any event to start from there and come south to the Assiwaban, and not to go from Fanny's, for now the fall winds were on, strong from north, and cold. It was better to have these subarctic trades on one's back.

The steamer came the 26th, with good news from home, and I went up like a cork. In a matter of hours I was at Nain, looking for Aaron. Then my prospects fell off again, for he was away

and no one else would go. The missionaries were preoccupied, chiefly about their steamer, the *Harmony*, now a month late,—perhaps in the ice at Chidley. There was only one thing to do, and I slipped away alone the morning of the 27th, leaving the place to its cares. It was afterward reported that I had gone north.

Everything was wrong. It was my first rowing that year and the gear was not tuned up; with a rope rowlock the oars are apt to twist a little and wear the hands. A southeast wind, a head wind, made things worse. Five miles south from Nain I came across a tent and a man codfishing, a nearly white man of a good kind, named Webb, from Port Manvers, north. He would sail me along a few hours for the price of a quintal of fish, but as we both thought the wind was going to shift to southwest and relieve my difficulties, I rowed on. It was a mistake; the wind held, increased, and before long a wide, tide-worked passage barred my way, though doubtless I could have got across in the course of time. I took to a smooth, barren island for the night, where there was a fairly sheltered lee and a little driftwood. The wind let up a little later, but I stuck to my fire. Rain came on, and sleeping under the canoe, which was rather narrow, the edges of my oilskin coat, which I had laid down on the ground, worked out under the drip and collected it under me. The coat was as good as a bath tub. Memo for travelers: Let not your ground-cloth get out under the eaves!

A fresh northwester was on in the morning, but with hard work I got on with a mile or two under something of a lee. Gyrating about in the puffs were a good many gulls; one a fine, business-like burgomaster — they are large, stout birds — who

bore up wind and deliberately looked me over with his pale eye as he wore across a few yards away. He had something in his mind. That long beak with the hook is for tearing things on the beach.

Then came a wide passage. The wind came with a long run here, from a deep bay reaching inland. Landing, I looked and looked again, then went back on a hill and looked more, trying to get the measure of the tide run on the other side. As things looked I could have got over, but the trouble with such places is that it takes half an hour to get to the worst of the tide run, and in that time new currents may develop, let alone more wind, and everything go to the bad. Not only does the traveler without local tide knowledge find himself thus standing on one foot and then on the other at such times, but the bay people too. This time I had some two hours of it.

I put out gingerly, but was no sooner beyond the sheltered water under the shore, and out where the rough water had been, than everything quieted down and gave me no trouble. There was still a tide crotch bobble beyond the turn at the crested hill, which was almost but not quite troublesome, but from there the wind was nearly aft.

For hours I rowed most of the time one side only, letting the wind do the work of the other oar. Such a yawing craft never was before. In the same wind the 1903 *Oldtown* would have rowed evenly and fast.

I had not much hope of seeing any one along the way, for the bay people go to outside waters at this time for codfish. What I had in mind was to go as far as the high barrens anyway, beyond the forks of the Assiwaban, see the deer, and if things went well keep on to Mistinipi and the



Indians. If they had moved with the deer, as they had said they might, the round trip from Nain inland and back to Davis Inlet might cover some three hundred miles. If I had not been a good deal worked up about the situation I should not have taken on so large a job alone, particularly at that time of year. Nor was it certain that the Indians would be a pleasant or profitable find to make, anyway, as things were.

What changed the face of things for me, for changed it was, was the finding of Edmund Winters at his place near Voisey's. Finding him at home I floored there, as a matter of course, and we all had things over in the evening. I owned up to not liking to make the trip alone. In the course of the evening Edmund and his wife talked together, then asked me if their boy would do me any good.

"How old is he?"

"Fifteen, but he is strong."

"I'll take him! Now show me the boy."

About seven in the morning, August 29th, we started for the Assiwaban, some eight miles. Richard had never been in a canoe before, and I let him row while I paddled. We lunched at my camping place of July, where the date and record I had left at that time, as always in lone stopping places, looked quite historical now. A seal swam about at one hundred and fifty yards, throwing himself clear of the water in a magnificent back somersault at our shot. It did not follow that we had scraped him; they seem to do it for fun sometimes.

On the portage by the falls black flies were plenty in the bushes, as is the way in September. Two miles above on a gravel beach we

camped, with an eye for trout, and the same redoubtable salmon fly I had used in July came into play, with its eight feet of line and a stick. We slapped the shallow water at twilight in good Assiwaban style, close to the shore, soon getting all we wanted; there were ten trout weighing some twenty-five pounds. We would haul them around sideways without any play and run them up the sloping bank. Richard cleaned them in the dusk. In the morning he called to me that there were two kinds, and so there were. *Namaycush* some were surely, one nearly two feet long. The few I have seen in the lakes have been deepish fish, but these were long and rangy, as if living always in running water. They were brilliantly colored.

The rapids next day went slowly; Richard was not used to the running water. At our camp on the Natua-ashish trout were jumping, but our stick rod would not reach out to them; we did not need them anyway. There were few game tracks along the beaches, even in this year of caribou. Next day we were well punished getting toward the wind lake, inching for hours against vicious squalls; here some trained paddling power would have served. All at once the fuss abated, and the long wind lake, now on the Canadian map as Cabot Lake, let us through easily after luncheon; and although rain held us half a day, we made the forks September 1st. Rather than try the bad boating beyond in cold, wet weather we hid the canoe and some provisions at the forks. A can of pea-meal ration left there in July was intact. We had, by the way, left enough tins of this along back, cached beyond possible discovery, to take us out afoot to the coast at least half fed. There was not much danger of personal harm from the Indians, but



MAKING PEMMICAN AND WORKING SKINS, MISTINIPI



with their own peculiar humor they might like to see how light of supplies and outfit we could travel.

We started for the highlands with a few days' supplies of bacon, hardbread, tea, and tin rations, the light, round tent, and a blanket apiece. The combination gun, a few cartridges, a folding camera and films pretty much completed the loads of, say, thirty-five and twenty-two pounds. Richard had a hooded Eskimo frock or "dickey." We had tin cups and a small pail for the tea, and a rectangular dripping pan of sheet iron some two and a half inches deep for frying and stewing. A square pan is less likely to upset than a round one, and fits such things as fish and most shapes of meat better. These "cooking tools" were very light. A notched stick three or four feet long, shoved into the ring of the pan, saved bending over, as one has to with a short handle. Such a handle is a great convenience with a thin pan, which must be held over the fire by the cook most of the time, or the fish will burn.

It was a black, misty day of strong north wind, cold and cheerless, but luckily the wind came from one side and not ahead. The first caribou appeared soon in the deer bush among the rolling ridges, and I made a high miss. They were nearer than they looked, as things in the barrens are usually. There were seven or eight young bucks and does. It was late when we started, and as the climb to the high level was more than a thousand feet, by the end of the afternoon we were tired, although only twelve or fifteen miles out. We were then on a high reach of country leading west, with a streak of scattered spruce, dead and alive, running along for quite a distance; a sort of growth

which generally appears on such damp north exposures. Rain began, and we put up the tent in the lee of a stunted tree or two. Wood came easily; the dead trees, white and hard, four or five inches through at the butt, were rotten at the ground and pushed over easily. With a butt under each arm we trailed them quickly to camp, and in twenty minutes had plenty of wood for all night, though scattered as the trees were it had taken some acres of land to furnish them. It had been very cold and raw all day, and occasional snow came with the rain. Now the gale increased. Only a wind break of such evergreen stuff as we could get together enabled us to keep the tent and fire from blowing away. If it had not rained much we could have used the tent as an extra blanket and got on without fire; as it was we agreed that one of us must stay up and keep the other warm. The boy had the first turn. He was off in an instant, and though the night was long it seemed a pity to wake him, especially as the fire took experienced management. At times I dozed in the firelight. Before morning the wind shifted east, a warmer quarter, and fell off a little, also the rain. I moved the wind-break to suit, and dawn came at last. How the boy did sleep! I thought I should have to drag him twice around the fire before getting him awake. When at last he became conscious he jumped readily to his feet and went to work with a will. Things were quieting down, I was all but asleep anyway, and in a few minutes must have gone well down to the level he had pulled up from. In three hours or so I felt a touch and faintly heard a whisper, "Cartridge! Shot cartridge!" I waked enough to find two or three and fell away again. When I

finally turned out the boy was picking four ptarmigan, which he had killed with two shots. He was a silent boy, and a little shy then, having never been away from his people before. I was of a strange breed and he made no advances, but was an unusual boy nevertheless; his little white "dickey" held most of the good qualities of dog, boy, and man.

Off we went, a little late after the two nights we had made of it, one for each of us, and in four or five miles had flanked a long pond and were broad off the high portage. We had occasionally seen some sign of the Indian route,—it is not a trail—here a stone laid upon a boulder on the crest of a ridge, there a burnt brand at the edge of a pond. The Indians go free, high over the shoulder of a hill, sloping off to the right or left for some winding pond, across long levels and up some unbelievable slope—but where the footing is good. There is no visible path from where they leave the bushes near the forks to the hills south of the high portage where their signs appear no more.

A bunch of caribou appeared before luncheon. They were feeding on the deerbush in a sheltered depression. We needed a meat cache there for the return and sacrificed a doe, weighted our packs reluctantly with meat, and went along familiar ponds to the southwest. We were carrying with a string over the head, with twigs under it to bear on, and another string around the points of the shoulders. The packs so carried kept wonderfully steady; they seemed a part of us. There was no swinging and lurching as we twisted about among the boulders, then perhaps down into the mud and up with a stretch upon a stone again. The wet weather had spoiled the traveling, doubled the work.

Misty rain drove from north again as we camped. But for being in the lee of a rifted boulder, some twenty feet long, we could not possibly have kept the tent up; it flapped and loosened as the gusts came around the ends of the rock, sometimes from one side and again the other. We would shove out the heavy stones which held the edges down and tighten up a little now and then, but it looked as if we should have the tent down before morning. Once in the evening I put my head up over the rock and took the wind and fine rain in my face. It was about impossible to bear the sting. We slept fairly; it was not so cold as the night before.

Many caribou were feeding on the smooth hill north of Long Pond next day, moving off and on as we approached, and circling widely for our wind. They showed more curiosity than fear. A perky young buck walked up within fifty feet, dancing and performing as he tried to make us out behind a boulder. Catching our wind at last, he turned short, dove down the steep hill, dashed across the wide valley, and out of sight, as if pursued by demons. His instant change from a dancing prince to a panic-stricken fugitive, fairly falling over himself down the hill and not looking back, was very funny. An hour later we remarked that he must be going yet.

Four or five of the deer that we had disturbed in crossing the hill soon appeared swimming across Long Pond below us, looking like ducks in the distance. Through the calmer hours came occasionally the warning note of geese as we passed the ponds. They spotted us far away on the ridges. The cry of loons was frequent, usually high in the air; their September uneasiness was on,





A WINDY CAMP



they would soon be gone. Soon the geese and loons would be at the shore; indeed by the time we were out the former were honking at us again from low points and islands, and at Fanny's I saw some part of the "million geese" Spracklin had told of there — a small part. There were no mice this year. Whether they had moved or died off is not clear. There is one circumstance that supports their migrating,—their habit of swimming the rivers in numbers at night. It would seem that they could not have any motive for merely swimming about, but were going somewhere. In 1905 they were so numerous on the land that we often saw two at a time as we were walking. Every low twig was riddled by them. One could not lay bread or meat on the moss without picking up a dozen or two of their minute droppings. It was pleasanter this year without them, but in their presence one thing was always worth considering, that so long as they were about one could not possibly starve. They were like field mice, with rather stumpy tails. There were lemmings, also, two kinds as I remember. The idea of the mice being night swimmers is only inferential; they were rarely if ever on the water daytimes, yet all the trout of any size were full of them. A trout of only a pound weight would contain several. The fish actually tasted mousey, and we used to rip them up as fast as caught and let the mice drop out, which seemed to help matters.

The wolves sang at night, never very near. The pitch seemed a little higher than that of the Eskimo dogs. The steady hunting call of the wolves came sometimes in alternation with the cry of the loons. Ptarmigan were scarce. In 1905 we ought to have seen one hundred and fifty in

such a walk, instead of the dozen we did in fact. Ravens were rather plenty, and jays, the latter very dark.

The rainy camp at the "Black Rock," as we called it, was the last at which we put up a tent; after that we used the tent for a blanket. The nights were generally freezing, and we had little enough covering, but slept snug together in our clothes and always fared well. The packs were now a little heavy with meat, and the next night R. owned up to being very tired. Just before stopping we started a band of four great stags with immense horns. They would not let us come nearer than a quarter of a mile, and went off in a great run. Presently they appeared on the side of a steep hill quite near, slanting up at a great pace. They were a grand sight in their wild rush along the sky line. The old stags are always shy.

Now, with fine weather, it was good to be out. There were no mosquitoes, and with their departure the curse of the country was lifted. Now we could sit down in peace, or walk, or have our thoughts. As the moss dried out on the hills near the height of land they looked almost snowy—they were velvet to the feet, and the days of walking were never too long. Sometimes we went over the hills, sometimes along the deer paths by the lakes.

At the third camp we left the tent, some food, and my skin boots. These last are as nothing in such a walk; when long wet they become pulpy, "tripy,"—and sharp stones cut through easily. This cache was at the thatched tree where Q. and I stopped with Indians the year before, on a small, pretty lake overlooked by a fine, rounded hill rising abruptly from the south side.

With beautiful Hawk Lake to the left we kept the highlands beyond and crossed the height of land in a high saddle, the third notch north of the regular portage route. Beyond were wide, boggy levels, well afloat, but we made Mistinipi before night at a point three or four miles down the lake, our crosscut having saved distance which we paid for in hard bog travel. During the afternoon a young stag furnished us with a reassuring cache of meat. There were tamaracks where we finally stopped, on a friendly level beside the lake, where wind could not do much harm, and where if necessary, being tentless, we could put up a brush roof. It rained a bit through the night, but as it was warm we were not the worse. A long belt of trees following the lake was full of ravens, cawing almost like crows, but with more modulation and a pleasanter voice. They had gathered there with an eye to certain deer carcasses, hauled up here and there along the shore by Indians. In the morning we left our blankets, took the camera, gun, and a bite to eat, and started for the main narrows to see if the Indians were still there. I was not very hopeful. Nevertheless in an hour, as we turned a point, across a wide bay appeared three deerskin lodges, surprisingly conspicuous and handsome in the sunshine. We brightened up and pushed around the bay in high spirits. Old Ostinitsu was cornered at last. On a point between us and the camp was a camp site lately abandoned. Pieces of rotten meat lay about, and other rubbish not inviting; it was not pleasant. There was a windrow of large horns, in the velvet, stacked together. I think the old meat was left there to attract foxes and the like; the trapping season would soon be on.

The Indians' ordinary camping places are kept clean.

Four or five Indians were sitting in a little dug out, hollow depression on a knoll back of the lodges, their faces turned rather away from us across the lake. We were within a hundred yards of them before they noticed us. Then one happened to look our way, spoke to the others, and all rose, tall against the sky, and descended to meet us. We walked forward, our gun empty and thrown open. They were the older men. Ostinitsu I knew, but not the others. They looked surprised to see us there. "Tante mit-shiuap?" O. asked, "Where is your tent?" I explained, and he remembered the spot. Where is your canoe? "Mistastin lishtuets." How many in the party? "Only the boy," I said, looking back at Richard, "but he is a good boy." The men looked at each other, spoke a little, and seemed at a loss. There was no doubt of their surprise at the situation. White men did not travel that way. I took the lead. "Can you let me have a pair of moccasins? There has been much rain, and the country is wet and hard to travel," and I turned up my foot to show the holes. O. murmured something, but seemed absent. Presently we went on to the lodges. Women, mostly in cloth dresses, others in deerskins, and children, came out and stood about, but nothing much developed, and I felt it in the air that they did not know precisely what to do with us. To give them a chance to talk matters over I thought I would go off out of the way, and accordingly started with Richard up the long slope of the hill west, saying to Ostinitsu, "You know it snowed and blew when we were here a year ago, and now I want to get



CARIBOU





a picture of the lake while it is good weather,"— this of course in Indian,— and leaving our gun on a rock I asked him to put it inside if it rained, for it was a little showery. He nodded vaguely and we departed.

As we approached the camp again an hour afterward all the people were standing together about a little tree, evidently in council. They spread about as we came on. Some of the younger men, Nahpayo, Pakuunnoh, and Puckway, whom I knew, came and shook hands warmly. O. also had turned altogether agreeable, and asked us to stay with them. We were glad to accept, and I asked him for a canoe to sleep under, also to have our things fetched up from the place where we had slept. He demurred at our sleeping under a canoe, pointing to a little cloth tent used to store dried meat in, and urging us to use that, at the same time sending a canoe for the baggage, with Richard along to find the place.

My chance had come. I wandered about with the camera and made the most of the situation. Smiles prevailed everywhere as I went about; we were guests of the camp. It must have been agreed that we deserved something for our walk. The older women did various operations on the skins with their different tools, made pemmican, went through many acts of their routine. They lifted the covering skins from whatever I cast my eyes upon, showed me what was there and what everything was for. Most of their dried meat and other things were piled close alongside the lodges, covered with skins.

Two or three young women, "buds" of the season, were round about without visible duties. They watched me with interest at times, or hob-

nobbed with the older women over the skins they were working, discussing this or that point, perhaps the use to which one skin and another was best adapted, whether they would best go this way or that. A younger girl, the daughter of Minowish, one of the best of the older men, certainly had eyes, nor were any of those younger ones failing in a certain coquettish air. The housewives were pleasantly grave and simple. These older women looked hard worked and thin, under all their unusual toil upon meat and skins, besides their household duties. The men appeared well fed and easy. The man's work of providing game was mere sport as things were.

The next time I saw these people, in 1910, the women were comparatively round faced, and looked as if life was going well, while the men were trained down and hard conditioned. The deer were scattered sparsely over the country, the food scaffolds were low, and the hunting men had to be always afoot over the country. So it goes, too much or too little, one year and another. Whether, in this winter of early 1911, the deer still remain and all may eat, or the women and children are waiting, with small hope, for what the hunters may bring, is as it may be. Too often the game fails utterly. If still in the country east of the George the people should be able, if necessary, to force their way to the coast for relief before the worst.

A straight old woman, dressed all in caribou skin, came to me and began to explain something with great earnestness, but I found it hard to make much of what she said. After a time I understood that a young man was ill; I was not to go to the lodge where he was. The young man, it seemed,

was about the size and age of a certain girl, and she pointed to another lodge. I thought little of the matter then, so much was going on that was distracting. Old Nijwa, the woman who had done the talking, asked if I had a bit of tobacco to spare, for they all smoke, but I had not at that moment. Later I walked toward her lodge with a small piece, speaking as I approached. She flew to the door, warned me away with extreme energy, and pointed to a girl evidently very ill, behind in the tent. Then I understood; there were two young people ill, a young man and a girl. She was so excited that she hardly noticed the tobacco. I have often thought of the unusual conscience she showed in warning us; too rarely is the like to be met with nearer home.

They had speared no less than twelve or fifteen hundred deer in a few weeks. From three to five hundred carcasses, skinned and washed out, were hauled up on the gravel beach, drying hard and black in the sun and the cool September wind. There were no flies about them and no smell. Later the meat would be stripped off and baled away. At first I thought the carcasses had been thrown away, but not so; meat I had seen them traveling with evidently came from just such whole carcasses. The head was always gone—the hunter himself must eat it or forfeit his fortune in the chase; the rest belongs to the group in common. Not all the carcasses were complete, sometimes a leg or other part was gone. The spectacle of so many blackened carcasses, more or less dismembered, was not pleasing, at any rate not to us who had never suffered famine; it was a savage feast, alike for Indian, wolf, and raven.

O. asked me if I had any bread — he probably

wanted it for the sick ones. I said no, I was getting to be an old man and could not carry much across the barrens — there had been plenty of caribou for us to travel on; but I handed him some of the pea-meal ration. The old man looked at me, reached out his long arms, laid his hands upon my shoulders and said, "You may be an old man, but you would make a great chief trader!" They still hoped I would come and trade. I had no sense of overfamiliarity on his part. It is remarkable how intimate these people can be when they care to, without the least offense. It is the mark of their quality, perceived by many who have known them. Of these long ago was Baron Lahontan, who, coming from the most brilliant court of Europe to the tribes of the Upper St. Lawrence, was able to say, in effect, "As for myself I must acknowledge that the manners and personality of these people are entirely agreeable to me." And in a recent day on Maniquagan River came the almost unwilling observation of a companion from the Anglo-Saxon world, a world which has scant grace and unseeing eyes for native races, "After all, the natural Indian is a good deal of a gentleman."

A little fire was made outdoors at ten or eleven and a large copper kettle went on, filled well up with crushed marrowbones. As it boiled Ostinitsu stirred it with a four-foot stick and all the camp gathered by. After it had boiled enough O. skimmed the grease and a little deer hair off the top, brought out an earthen bowl, took up a pint and a half of the broth, and offered it to me. It was a little tallowy; the under part of the stock had evidently been boiled before, but it was not bad. I did not get quite enough.



A WINDROW OF HORNS



Richard came back in due time with the baggage. The party had come upon two deer swimming the lake. The canoe was run hard upon one, which was speared, and then the other, both in the back. One of them nearly upset the canoe. Richard said the blood spurted as high as the gunwale. The deer were left with just enough strength to reach the shore, where they fell in the edge of the water without being able to get out. The Indians took the skins and the best of the meat, leaving the rest.

Richard was hungry enough by this time, for it was long since breakfast, and I advised him to take his share of the soup, but after looking into the kettle he shook his head. Ostinitsu looked at him sharply, but said nothing. I had to get up some tea and ration for the boy.

Some of the Indians went up to the lookout with us, taking along a little spyglass. Deer were visible three or four miles away on the ridges, passing west and not coming to the crossing, perhaps owing to the wind, which made the lake a little rough, and no deer came across that day. The glass was not very good, and I could see them only when their backs were above the sky line.

The spear is a sharp-edged, diamond-shaped blade of steel, on a slender shaft three or four feet long. As soon as the on-coming deer are safely away from land the older men from the lookout signal the young fellows down at the shore with the canoe, and these eager young wolves fairly lift their canoe over the water for the prey. A long windrow of horns, besides a separate pile of very large ones, were close by, and each pair must have stood for four or five does and smaller deer killed. It is a matter of necessity that the horns are piled

together; if they are left about it is understood that the deer will scatter when they come through the country, and be hard to get.

After a while, though I was not thinly dressed, the cool wind became too much for me, and I turned to go down the hill. The people laughed, as well they might. Some of the four and five year olds were about in perfect comfort, though wearing only one scant garment of caribou skin; near half their chests and legs were bare. The people stand cold as well as Eskimo, but cannot keep their working strength as well under starvation.

Four or five women had gone about sewing moccasins, and I hoped that one pair or another would turn out to be for me. A pair indeed! When the time came they gave them all to me, every pair, and smoked tongues and meat until we were embarrassed. Luckily I had some half dollars for them, which they accepted readily, examining the designs upon them with pleased interest. Most of all they were interested in some small photographs of my children. They passed them about and talked about them, but I could not understand much of what they said. Soon Ostinitsu's quiet wife went to her lodge and came back with two children of eight or nine. Standing by the side of Ostinitsu, the children between us, she said simply, "These are *our* children." She knew her jewels.

So the day wore on. Richard moved about contentedly, approved by all. Indians like boys. His share of presents was not small. Few had seen what we were seeing, perhaps none from the outer world of to-day—the primitive phase in its unchanged estate, on this immemorial range of



the caribou. Some things that the people had were from white hands, but the essential life was the same; the manners, the occupations, the means to a livelihood, the ancient belief.

To me they had the civil deference of bred people to a guest. When I pitched away my heavy old moccasins with the holes in them, which, however, had strong material left in them, Pakuunnoh picked them up, brought them to me, and asked if he might have them, an exhibition of mere manners. He knew I was done with them. So with a tin can thrown away at Mistastin one year, it was brought to us in the same way. From Richard and me, there at Mistinipi, they seemed to expect nothing.

We had meant to stay some time, a week or more. But toward the end of the day I had time for reflection and the matter of the sickness in camp rose to my mind. The trouble was probably measles, and I had had it, but the boy's danger was serious. With people of his blood measles was apt to be as fatal as smallpox. Indeed Nahpayo's young wife had suggestive pits in her face, hardly healed, and this was another matter. Richard's people had said to me, "We think you will take care of him," but if he was caught in the barrens with measles the result would be almost sure. Moreover, north storms were now seasonable and might bring heavy snow and cold; in truth just this thing happened three days after we were out of the country.

I spoke to Ostinitsu, saying I was afraid for the boy, and asked him to send us to the head of the lake by canoe. He seemed to appreciate my situation, and a little later, at a word from him, Pakuunnoh and Puckway put in a large rough-

water birch and we were off, all four paddling. The people of the camp stood upon the bank above the line of deer carcasses, a silent group, and waved us as we moved away. A stiff little sea was coming down the lake. We moved into it like a battleship, throwing high the spray, but no water came in. The spray divided and fell outside in a marvelous way. I had never seen the like. We made fast time, having almost no cargo and strong power. They put us off at a little eastern bay near the end, where we boiled a last kettle together and shared what we had — our pea-meal ration against their deer tongues.

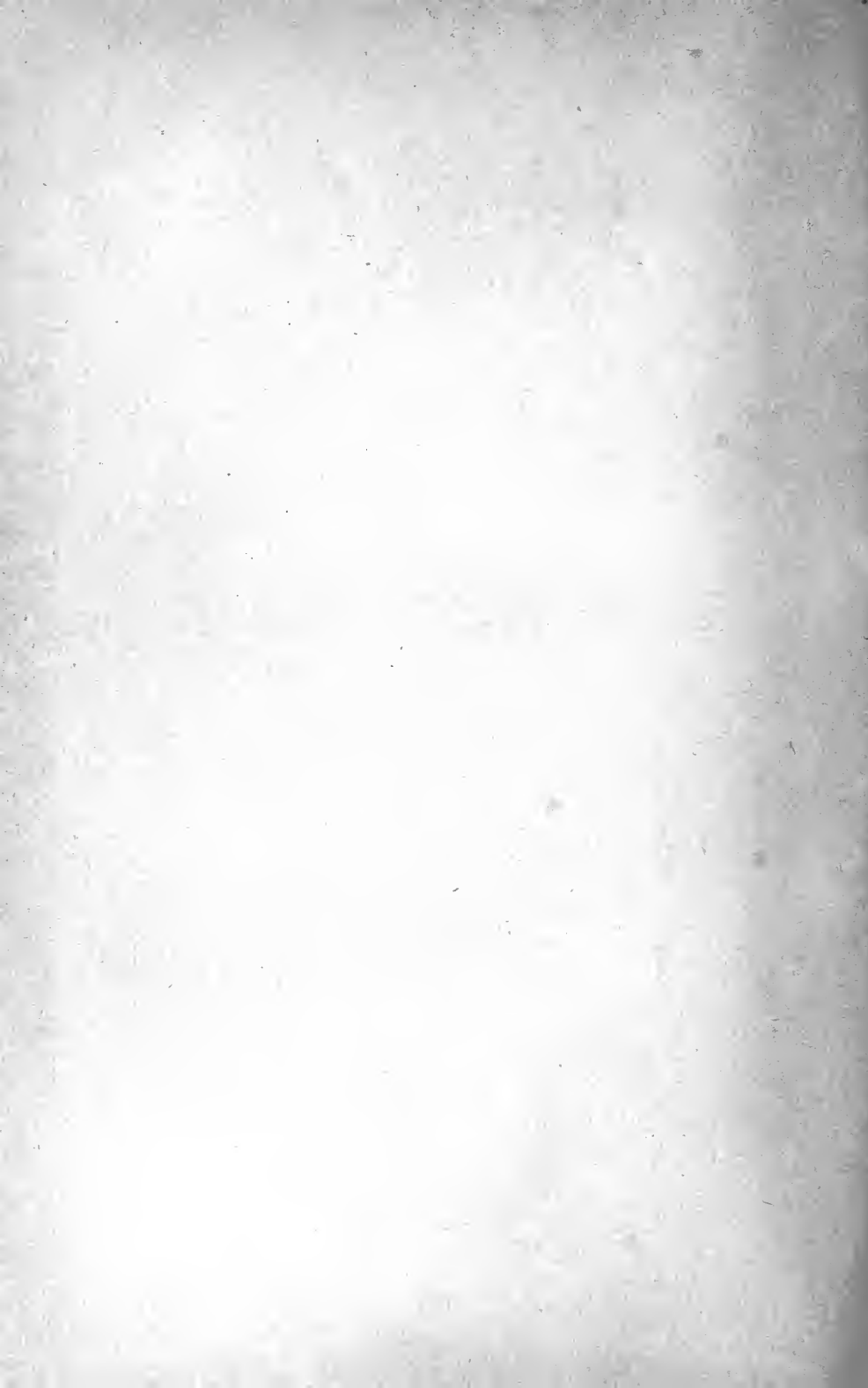
The sun went low. Pakuunnoh pointed at it. "Shakáshtuet piishum," he said, "The sun is setting," then pointed toward their camp. They must be going. I nodded and turned to the fire. I did not want to see them make the miserable averted Naskapi departure, especially after the day we had had together, but I heard their paddles dip away fast and knew they were gone.

In a little, as I bent over the fire getting up more tea, there came a sound from the lake and I looked up. The big canoe was swung broadside, and the two Indians were waving their long arms and whooping until the echoes came back. For some minutes it lasted. This was the real Naskapi good by — to friends. We sprang up and waved back, shouting; they turned the canoe, went fast down the lake before the wind, and it was four years before I saw any face of the tribe again.

In snug, sheltered ground with enough of wood, a mile on, we made a sky camp and were off in the gray of the morning. I was anxious about the measles. In the evening I had singed everything we had



LONG POND, FROM CARIBOU HILL, THE CARIBOU DARKENED FOR CONTRAST



taken from the Indians in the fire, by way of sterilizing them, but we had ourselves been a good deal exposed early in the day. Whether Richard was worried I never knew; we did not mention the subject on the march. From the way he held to the trail from daylight to dark I suspected that he was thinking.

It was well that we cached meat on the outward trip, for not a deer did we see on the way home. There were many tracks, and doubtless there were some deer to be seen if we had kept our eyes well out, but the newer tracks were all leading one way, to the south and west behind us. Our pace was good, light as we were, and night found us beyond the close hills on the broad slopes off Long Pond. A cold wind came from north, there was no shelter, and after the shower of the day we were long looking for a dry place to lie down on. In exposed places such as we were in one watches the weather signs anxiously before dark, for the nights are long and there is time between night and morning for great changes to come on. Now the storms were sudden and cold and a foot or more of snow might come over night. In the short nights of summer, if the signs are good at dark, there is little chance of a bad change before dawn. By the middle of September the situation is different, and if a norther should come in the night one would almost surely have to drive with it until stopped by some lake, or at best come upon some boulder or bush to get behind, perhaps for a day or two, and without fire. Then would come, if one could do it, a wallow of days in snow to the forks, without winter clothes and in moccasins like blotting paper. If the boy should be taken ill during such a period his chance would be small.

Most of one's misgivings are unnecessary, but a tremendous storm did come on a few days later, and the barrens must have been a wild place for seven or eight days. After all, a certain habit of considering possibilities serves at least to keep one's perceptions keen.

Our moccasins were stiff with ice when we got out in the morning, and we walked away on the top of the frozen moss. After the sun came up we began to sink through. Our meat at the Black Rock was just prime by this time, and we felt mere kings by our lunch fire there. We were having a royal walk! From there to our last meat cache it was wet and stony and boggy, a hard walk of hours; though at last, tired but cheerful, we walked up to the tree cache. Now the bad going was over, now we would have some more of that prime meat; for miles we had thought of nothing but that particular leg of caribou. Instead we had a surprise; not a sign of it was left! Our faces would have done to photograph.

The carcass of the deer was not far away and we went over to see what had happened to that. Before we got there a large wolf appeared, off beyond a brook, trotting briskly toward the carcass. He saw us, and instead of stopping, as most animals do, kept on and away with only a look; but before disappearing he did stop, at some two hundred and twenty yards, and I shot carefully, elbows on knees. The broad double muzzle of the gun lifted a little, and shut off the view for an instant, but I could see the wolf shoot high into the air, then gather and go over the crest behind him in a wabbling canter. It was bad, bushy walking in that direction, so, cross and tired, I turned back to the packs without going over.

Later the boy, who had seen clearly, said he was sure the beast was hit, as he came down in a ball and took time to get up. I ought to have gone over there. Anyway, he would steal no more meat.

Crossed in our dream we ill naturedly left the place, going on a mile or two before putting the kettle on. We had food enough, and indeed the pea-meal ration was better to travel on than the meat would have been. Mixed with a little hot bacon fat in the corner of the frying-pan, and followed by tea, it was the best thing to stand by one on a hard road of anything I have ever had. It was substantially like the German *erbswurst*, but with dried meat mixed in, a sort of dried meat sawdust. Whether dry or cooked, in soup or cakes, it was always good, and kept one going.

Richard and I were acquainted now, and talked. On the first of the outer road he had been shy, with little to say but "Yessir" and "No sir," and had no idea of the way of camp things. Now he did all the camp work handily and well. An early doubt on my part as to whether he was a bit lacking or really a genius had passed away. He had imagination and sensitiveness. The caribou killing we had to do hurt him. Curiously, part Eskimo that he was, he liked the Indians. At Mistinipi, as we went up the hill with the camera to leave them to themselves, he remarked on their fine looks — what good manners they had! How clean they were in their ways and cooking, compared with the Eskimo! He had once been out with his father and Eskimo in winter, and hated the Eskimo way of killing wounded deer with stones, to save cartridges. After we left the Indians he again dwelt upon their superiori-

ties — what fine people they were! This from a shore boy of Eskimo blood, whose life had been passed where almost none but Eskimo passed the door, was the last testimony one would expect.

We shared everything, of course. At night my oil jacket would go down on the moss, then the two blankets, then the tent as a coverlet. Close together we slept those frosty nights, under the stars and the waving north lights, each of us as good as a blanket to the other. Then the fire in the early gray, and the quick cooking — there was no bread to make. We ate the meat Indian fashion without salt. The scrap of bacon gave us all we used, and the little bag of salt we had was never opened. Until the small supply of hardbread was out we both had a tendency to prig it between meals, from keen starch hunger. At the last the dingy crumbs tasted plainly sweet, a curious fact that I have seen noted somewhere since. It looked to us as candy does to a child.

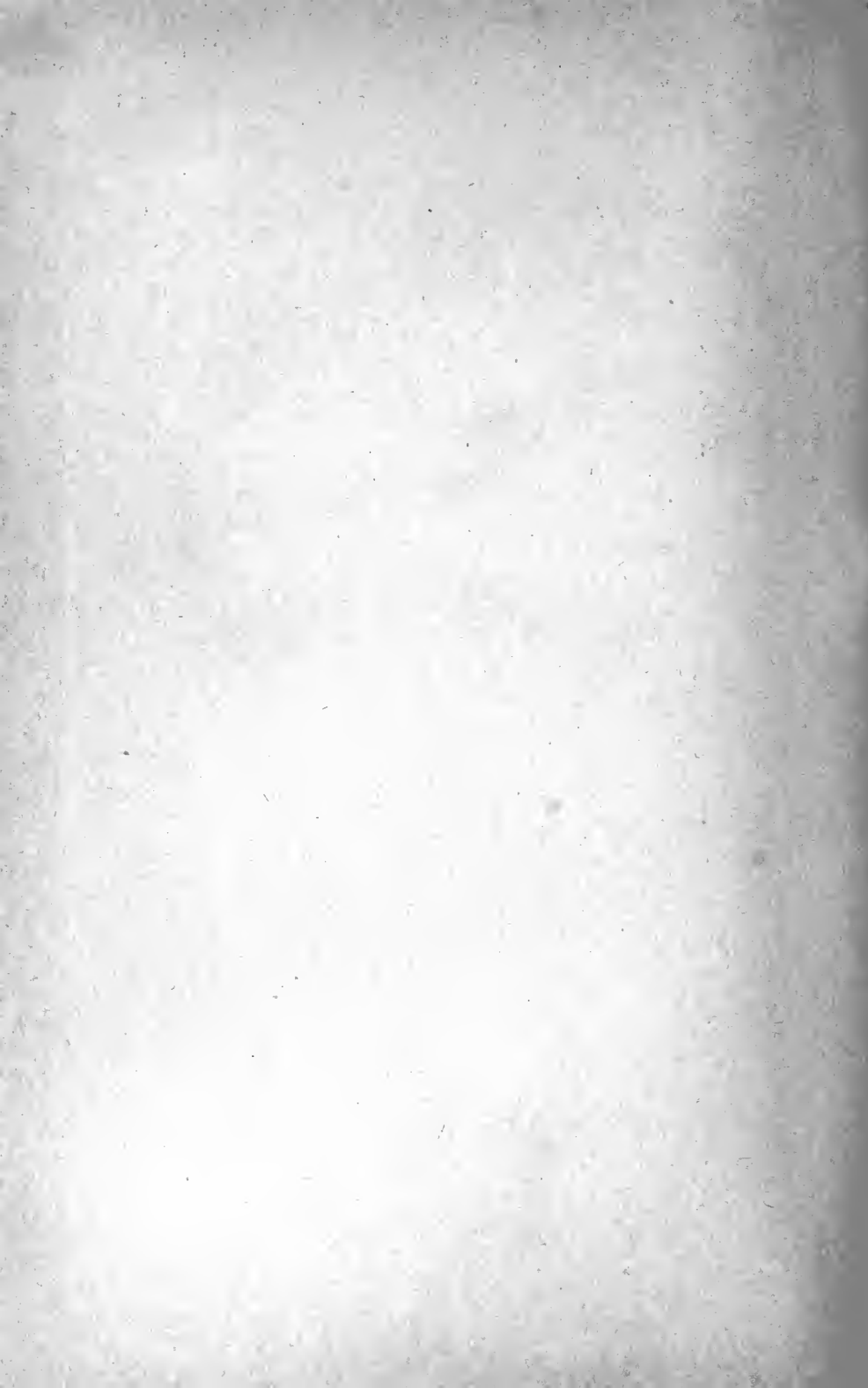
Richard's eyes were a marvel. My own are apt to dull a little when walking long with a head-strap pack, but he saw everything. All the game, without exception, he saw first. He was good, too, at keeping his bearings, and once, when we had swung in a long semicircle around a hill and were going back west, put me to flat discomfiture, the worse that I had disagreed with him sharply. It was a little time before I perceived that as I was taking it the setting sun was exactly in the east. Perhaps it was well for Richard's soul that I caught him nearly as far wrong a little later.

We both wanted to walk all night on the day of the wolf-looted cache, as it would bring us to the canoe by morning. I wonder to this day if Richard was thinking of what I was, of being taken





WATCHING THE CARIBOU. LOOKOUT AND DEER CROSSING AT MISTINIPI. NAH-PAY-O HAS A SMALL SPY GLASS



down with the Indian sickness. But the ground became rough and hilly at dark, we could not see our feet, and a cold breeze and a snow squall kept us hugged close under some lucky little bushes where we had had supper. It was very bleak and barren along there.

The hills were white for an hour in the morning. Before long we crossed a commanding ridge from which the walls of the wind-lake portal, many miles away, opened high and imposing. About nine R. spotted a bear a mile away plain against the white moss. I was disposed to let him go, as he was off our course, but Richard was eager and we turned that way. Some bushes gave an approach. It was a large he-animal, nosing the flat blueberry vines on a smooth level. I fired at near a hundred yards, when he leaped and ran fast for some little trees, among which we found him dead. They are slow to skin, like a beaver; there is no end of knife-work. It took a good while, for the bear was large, but there was no fat to mess up with — this year there were no mice for the bears, and the meat was lean, tender, and sweet. A berry bear is the thing. When at last I straightened up from the long job of skinning, there, not three hundred yards away, were two other bears, one a large cub. My films were just out, to my sorrow, for there were bushes near the bears and we could have gone close. We waved our caps and shouted, and the show vanished in a twinkling.

The skin and meat we had taken were heavy, and by the time we made the canoe, about one o'clock, we were well warmed up. The wind lake let us by rather decently, but once in the river a raw sea wind came up the valley with a chill which went through us, unused as we were to sit-

ting still, and we camped about dark under a wooded point not far below the lake. The sheltered place seemed like a tavern with cheer, after the naked barrens. A fine driftwood fire blazed long after we were asleep.

Now came a little personal experience. In the night I awoke uncomfortable and found myself broken out on the body just as Ostinitsu had described the sick young man to be. Some fever went with the great irritation, and I began to speculate on what was coming. I had had measles, and ought to be immune, but remembered the pits on the face of Napao's wife. Who, on the coast, could be expected to take care of a smallpox stranger? It would be almost certain death to any native to do it. For an hour or two I thought very hard. Plans of getting in some way to Dr. Grenfell's hospital at Indian Harbor, some four hundred miles away, would not work out. I had thought that at one time or another I had considered about all the things that could well happen to one knocking about in this way—accident, starvation, freezing, drowning, or ordinary illness, but here was a new idea. I was never, I believe, more inclined to call myself names for wandering about at all in such places. It was an unpleasant situation.

At last I remembered some old bouts I had had with hives, heat rash, in hot weather, and that alkali was the thing. It would ease the impossible itching, whatever the cause. There was a piece of old castile soap in my kit, the nearest alkaline thing available. It remains to be said that before this remedy my cause of woe faded readily away. Still the circumstance was not a dream, for before I left the coast the nuisance came on more than

once, with fever, and again shook my faith a little; perhaps it was really not so uninteresting a matter as hives. The immediate cause on the river was doubtless the unusual perspiration from carrying the heavy unfleshed bearskin with head and feet attached, in addition to my pack.

Ah-pe-wát, the young man at Mistinipi, died of his illness, as did the girl. It was said afterward that some of old Edward's tribe had carried up measles to the Indians from the shore.

The next day, the 13th of September, was our last day out. Passing through the great pools there were trout everywhere even at that late date; a little farther down some geese cheered us with their talk and presence, and a good many seal heads showed below the falls. One of the seals came very near, almost under the boat, near our tea place at my old roost of July. Richard shot at it with his forty-four, now taken out of cache along the river, but missed. It is a curious thing that with all his experience on water he was if anything a little less steady on it than I. His father had said when we started, "He will do well on the water, I am sure of that, but you may be too much for him walking." Not so. He was uneasy as we ran the slight rapids of the river coming down, and curiously enough, I saw all the water game first, up river and outside. He was, of course, perfectly easy on the large inlet where he was at home, though not remarkable. But on the land he was for his age a wonder of endurance, courage, and all the silent qualities that take one over the barrens unstarved, and make for the joy of the trail.

At just sunset we cleared Assiwaban Point. Tide and wind were wrong as far as the low point of

Long Island, where a stout clangor of geese saluted us in the dark, and the metallic rush of beds of unseen ducks sounded again and again to the front. At ten we called out to the sleeping Winters. They had not been worried; that morning for the first time the mother had remarked that we might be looked for now. But I was thankful, on the whole, to hand their boy over without harm, as thankful as I had been for having him. The little bread upon the waters, sowed in carelessness when E. had had his trifles to sell two years before, and without which I fancy he would not have thought of offering me his son, had certainly come back to me. The trip was not long, scarcely two hundred and fifty miles as we had traveled, nor had there been any hardships, but considering all,—the season, the ordinary chances of the way, and the little plot in the Indian matter, things might not have gone so well.

It was now a run for the steamer and home. It ought to have taken a fortnight or so. What it did take was forty-two days—six weeks. Apropos is the remark of an old fisherman at House Harbor, the evening before Q. and I caught the *Virginia* there, in 1905. A few men from schooners about were gathered in Voisey's little house by the stove, and some one remarked that Skipper So and So had got his cargo of fish,—a "voyage of fish," as they say,—and was starting for home. Fish were scarce that year and the skipper's good fortune was generally conceded, if not envied. Then an old fisherman spoke in: "Yes, he's got his voyage; but he's not clear of the Labradór yet." Nor did any demur at the implication. It is a coast of uncertainties.



PUCKWAY





Winter's fish were "out of salt," and had to be taken care of without much delay. He would sail me for a day or two, however, and he and Richard and I started the 14th, after only a night at the house. We worked our way in a calm only to Un'sekat, that day, twelve miles, there to be windbound two days by a northwester. The house was unoccupied and wood scarce, but it was a comfortable period and I was glad to have rest. The bear skull came in for a cleaning and W. scraped the skin and staked it out. In the night some white foxes came nosing about and we had to cover the skin. The foxes would hardly go away from the light when we opened the door. They are tame, innocent things compared with other foxes.

W. talked about his letting the boy go with me, a notable thing considering the coast feeling about the interior. He had always heard of me as a "kind man." If we had been gone over two weeks they might have feared lest something had happened to me, "so as to leave the boy uncared for." Without accident to me they "felt sure the boy would be safe" — they were trusting enough!

By five the second day we parted, he for the north and I south by canoe. I meant to camp about seven miles on in a little rock-walled amphitheater open to the south, where there were Eskimo circles, and a little wood and water; it was a favorite place of mine. There I did stop and boiled a kettle. The weather signs were peculiar; with the letting down of the northwester it became warm, a faint air from south occasionally stirred the surface and quite a few stars showed through overhead. It seemed as though the thin overhead scurf might thicken

and bring a little warm rain and south wind, but nothing more. But the peculiar feature was in the northeast. Behind level gray clouds showed a long background of an unusual pale salmon color. In the northwest it would have stood for bright weather at least, the color was well enough, but there seemed something not quite usual about it, and the clouds of the sunset quarter had remained gray. Still it seemed better to be going along in the warm, calm night than to be bounding about on a northwester, perhaps, next day. Not much good weather could be expected now, and what there was ought to be made the most of. So, well satisfied with the opportunity and my own diagnosis of things, I put out after supper on the ten-mile stretch to Tom Geer's. It was easy going, the oars worked well and silently. A wonderful phosphorescence appeared with any stirring of the water. I have hardly seen the like. The whirls from the oars were very bright. If I had only known it here was one of the weather signs, as I knew later, of old John Lane, who used to say, "When the water burns look out for wind!"

Four or five miles on was a low, black point. I headed for it when near, with seemingly a third of a mile to go, pulling complacently along at a good rate and taking a sort of pride in the fire-works I was making in the water. The eddies from the oars were wonderfully bright, but faded fast. "A blaze, a nebula, a mist," I was repeating to myself at each stroke — things go in rhythm when one is rowing alone. All at once there was a bang and I was on my back in the bottom of the canoe. I had rowed full speed into a square-faced rock and bounded back. I put my hand down instantly

for water, thinking the bow must be shattered. None came, nor did later, though I tried for it now and then. Not the least damage was done. But one needs a bow-facing gear by night; there is no judging distances then.

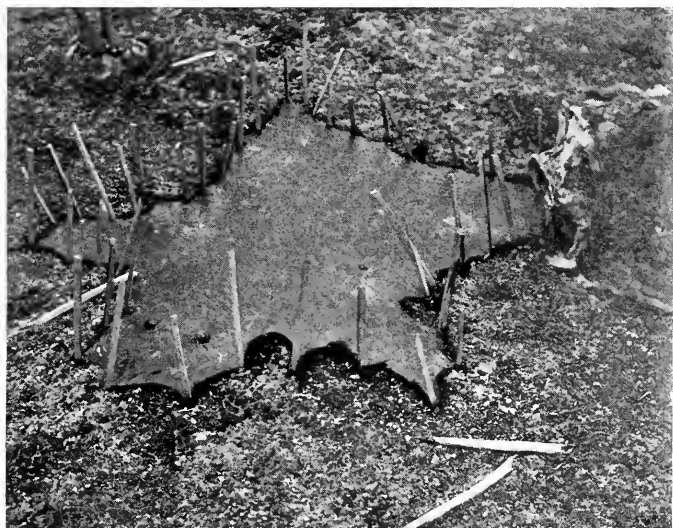
By the time I reached Geer's, about midnight, the sky had thickened and it was very dark. I did rather well to find the house, weathered white though it was. No one was there and I hesitated to break the lock — foolishly, for it was now sure to rain soon. I was sleepy, my mind was only half working; anyway, I started along and edged around the shore for Daniel's Rattle. There are several little irregular bays along, and not liking to get into the wide outside run among the islands I worked slowly around all these bays, in and out, so as not to miss the inside passage. There is a certain comfort in being on the mainland if one is driven upon shore. If I could have gone straight along past the little bays it would have taken much less time, but in such darkness there was no doing anything by landmarks. It was so dark that at the very oar's end I could not see the little white breakers against the boulders without straining my eyes.

Somewhere about two o'clock big drops began to fall and the wind struck like a club from north. The night's work was over. Luckily I came in a few minutes to a little rocky nook sheltering enough level moss ground for the canoe. There was just room between the boulders to get through to a most providential landing place. The rock shore had been steep, broken, and sharp edged for some distance. Under foot on the beach some white driftwood was visible; the first thing was to put three six-foot sticks up under the canoe

before they were soaked, for some time there would need to be a fire, then I took care of the gun and baggage. I lay on a cross bar of the canoe, to keep it down, and, wrapped in blanket, bearskin, and tent, got on fairly until morning. The rain blew under and things became pretty damp as the hours went on. At daylight it began to snow hard. It was a great storm. Twenty-six schooners along southward went down that night or were wrecked on the shore. Others than myself had not read rightly that salmon band.

There was no having a fire; the place, though somewhat sheltered, was still too much exposed to the wind. Something had to be done, the damp and cold were creeping in. The air was just at freezing, the snow neither melting nor stiffening. On a ridge in sight were some trees and I made a sortie, but there was no dry wood there; the wind was strong, the long moss full of water. Back I went soon with a run; neither hands nor feet would stand the wet cold. Deerskin moccasins are as blotting paper. Diving under the bearskin I stayed a few hours more, eating cold ration and wondering if it was to be a three-day blow. If so, I could not hold out there, and without the bearskin I should have been damaged as it was. Somewhere about one o'clock, I thought, the snow let up, and I got a little fire started under a tiny bush growing against a rock, in a little sort of hen's nest there. Soon there was a good fire going and I was steaming before it. The F. S. H. match-box and the dry sticks had stood by, and the fire went with the first match.

Daniel Noah's winter house was not more than two miles away, and though there was not much chance of his being there, a house, after all, is a



A MISTINIPI BEARSKIN



FLESHING A DEERSKIN WITH DOUBLE LEG BONE OF A DEER



house. It was still raining and blowing, but I could get about. In fully exposed places the wind was too strong to stand up in, so avoiding the open shore, struck off back through the woods, taking blanket, eatables, and axe. Two swamps took me well to my waist and over my matchbox. Of course, as the luck was going, there was no one at Daniel's, nor was the house itself much of a find. The windows were partly out, the roof dripped all over, wood was scarce, the old oven stove had holes in it. These last I patched with tin cans. An hour's steady firing and the miserable thing was scarcely warm, and I was chattering and wishing too late that I was back with the driftwood pile and bearskin. Things looked bad, with another shivering night on. I was overtrained from the inland trip and hadn't much internal heat. To my surprise, however, after a second hour of firing the old stove glowed well, and I smoked a pipe after supper in comfort. There was a two by six dry spot in front of the stove, the only one about — the Noahs had to have one place to stand, I suppose. There I put down the blanket and as soon as my head was down went off like a trap, dead to all things. In an hour I waked; the fire was out and my bones were fairly knocking together. One blanket at freezing, with wind blowing through the house, is not overmuch. This went on through the night, which was a good bit more wearing than the night before.

The wind let down somewhat by two. In the evening it had been stronger than ever, a tremendous blow. The house itself was somewhat sheltered, but the wild racing of the water parallel with the shore in front was remarkable to hear. Getting back through the swamps in the morning

was sloppy work. I was pretty sure the canoe would have been blown away by the strong wind of the evening and involuntarily balked and stood still just before the place came in sight; then with an effort kicked myself along. It was all right, and the sight was decidedly a lift. I tumbled down the steep moss slope, slammed the canoe into the water, and bobbed off around the point. There was wind still, but not half what had been, and with a little cockade of a spruce tree in the bow for a head sail, to prevent yawing, I blew off down to Davis Inlet at a good pace. I had been laid up there thirty hours, with some wear, and but for the bearskin would have found it hard to get along at all the first night and morning. There is a moral about salmon streaks in the northeast and another as to summer clothes for freezing gales. The next year at Hopedale I saw that northeast salmon streak, mentioned it, and gained prestige when a norther came on, as it did.

Getting down to Davis Inlet the wider waters were lively. Squalls ran out from the points until I imagined being translated bodily, and flakes of snow were blowing about. The bearskin made a good lap robe, tucked well up. There was something of an audience on the wharf, David Edmunds and Poy among them, the best hunters. When they asked questions I told them I started from Un'sekat two nights ago, and tried to appear jaunty. But they saw the joke. Rather gravely, however, they took it. The ancient powers had been abroad those nights. Nor were the days just to their liking. David and Poy especially, lords of the open, knew the way of snow north-easters, and when they carried up the little canoe



from the beach they handled her with a certain regard, as for a horse that had made a good run.

The next two days I sat in the house, glad to be there. Then Guy came back from Lane's Bay with the Hudson's Bay Company schooner, which had been well mauled in the blow. Meanwhile the mailboat came to Fanny's and went back south without me. Even if I had tried to keep on I doubt my catching her; for the weather continued too bad for small boat travel until after she had gone.

The end of a trip needs little elaboration. A schooner came up the run and would take me to Fanny's. It was curious, when the three big, high-booted Newfoundlanders climbed out on the end of the post wharf, to see their worry about the dogs. They paused, eyed the dogs on the shore, got behind each other and argued as to who should go first. The dogs seemed quite in the humor of the situation. After all, a row of interested Eskimo dogs *can* be suggestive. The Newfoundlanders' own dogs, a wellnigh vanished breed now, are wonderfully like themselves, mild, strong, enduring, a water breed courageous.

Spracklin's fish had been washed, dried on his smooth rocks, and stowed aboard. For a week or two I wandered the island, somewhat with an eye for hares, which had, however, been well picked up by the foxes. One day, without gun or camera, I came close upon an Arctic fox, snow-white and ready for winter; he danced and postured long before his final departure.

In calm afternoons geese dropped into the little ponds of the level tundra. I saw a line of them winging in low one day, and threw myself

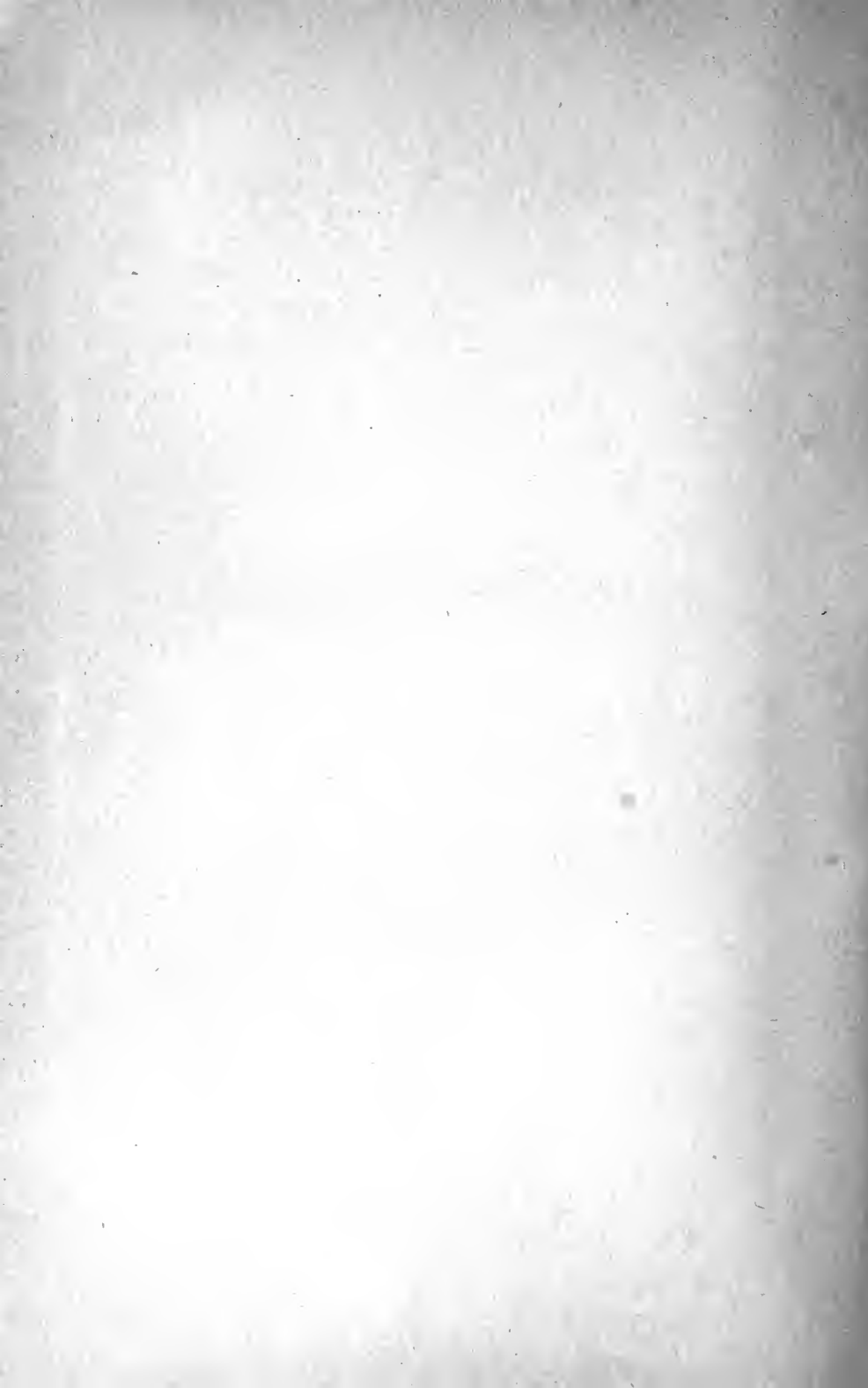
flat in a sag while they came down two hundred and fifty yards away. One of them assumed guard, while the others fed busily in the shallow pool. When the sentinel saw a flick as I turned over he spoke, a low quonk. Another took place beside him, and the two stood immovable, in double watch. The others splashed and reached under without reserve, but the two remained unrelaxed, statues in gray, to the end. There was no getting nearer, and I fired a little over.

Snow buntings were blowing about the rocks everywhere, the horned larks were gone, next would be snow and winter; the tremendous sea gales would sweep the island. On the hills of the mainland, to stay until spring, was snow from the great storm. The days were mild though cool. I knew they were the last free days in the North that I should ever have.

The gray old island, with its ice-cap smoothed hills, is the very emblem of the unchanging and immovable. The sea bellows in vain upon its outer shores, against stern walls, into spouting fissures and caves, washing high and recoiling low, heaving betimes its tremendous ice — and the granite gives no sign. Yet where shall be found the enduring? These granite hills, even, are not at rest, although the eye might choose this, if earth held the unchanging, as the place to endure to the end. The whole region is rising. One steps or climbs across fissures that are fresh to the eye. Above, about the slopes of the hills, are pebbled beach lines where once was the sea. The weight of the old ice-cap, it may be, bore down the granite into the plastic mass of the planet. Slowly the hills are returning to their height, rising century by century from the dank sea depths. When



NIJWA, DRESSED WHOLLY IN CARIBOU SKINS



the Norsemen came cod wandered the kelp where now the Irok blooms and the mitten flower bends in the wind. Another day the islands may again be hills, the sea passages valleys, with their lakes and streams; and again, in geologic time, may the ice-cap return, and the sea.

But through my waiting days the Cape island lay untroubled in the autumn sunshine, a place where all was peace, where feet might saunter and mind might drift in the ways of their will. Ah, the sweetening air of that long pause before the storms of fall! For the last time these hills! We were gathering to go, the birds and I. But now peace, the sun-warmed moss, and the creatures that were. It was a time of reckoning for me, the turning over of what had been in my Labrador years, the stringing of beads that should always a little shine. Some of these had seemed clouded in the gathering, but in the reverie of those final days they were lighted all. Though never the world again were young, there had been days. Coast and inland — inland and coast. The early hard days on the mainland, the hills and valleys alone, the calm of the noble bays; their silence, broken only by the rise of wings; Tuh-pungiuk and Un'sekat and Opetik; and the strong opposing sea. The rolling barrens, the hills of the height of land. The tall, grave people there, the smiling strong ones here; the aurora and the bergs and the innumerable insect foe. Long days and twilight nights, dark nights and stormy days; the sunshine on the sea and the white-backed eiders' charge.

So my string was strung. Always for me now would return the gray barrens, stretching far and on, always the lakes and the lodge-smokes on their shores. Always would the people watch the deer,

always stand silent at the shore, as friends would wave as they go; the land be ever theirs. The light that has been never quite fails the wilderness traveler; his feet may remain afar, but his mind returns

Where the caribou are standing  
On the gilded hills of morning,  
Where the white moss meets the <sup>er</sup>footstep  
And the way is long before.

## *Chapter IX*

1910

TO take one to a far country, year in and out, even though its people are well worth while, something of a mission is needed, an objective, and with its attainment the light which has led is apt to pale. With the passing of 1906 I felt that my shaft in the North had been shot, and so it proved. Revisiting, indeed, followed in 1907 and 1908, but only to the coast and nearer Assiwaban. From 1906 my days were bound. One trip which followed, and worth mentioning, though its days were not as the old days, had, after all, a motive, mainly geographical.

Through the years from 1905 to 1910 I had always thought I should like to work out the remaining part of the Indian route to the George, from Mistinipi on. Having done all the knocking about the country I had, it seemed a good finish to put on the map the whole route to Indian House Lake, the more so that it was doubtless the most feasible way into the interior anywhere from Hamilton Inlet up the whole Atlantic coast. After Mrs. Hubbard's journey down the George, in 1905, the idea strengthened a little with me, as her survey for latitudes afforded a convenient check line to connect with. In truth, as the Indian route was said to swing to the northwest from Mistinipi narrows, I could not see, from the compass work I had already done, how we could well agree in our positions. It seemed as if her mapping of Indian House Lake would turn out

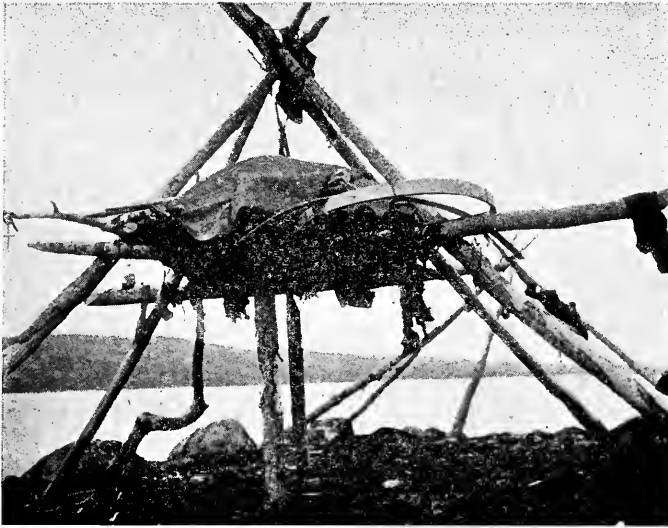
a little too far south; but it is only fair to her to say that the course of the Indian route continued more nearly west than I had reason to suppose, and my compass courses, which I finally did carry through in 1910, mapped out in remarkable agreement with Mrs. Hubbard's work.

As elsewhere told, I had visited Mistinipi narrows, for the second time, in 1906, and on that occasion photographed the lake from a headland on the north side where the broad lake opens out, and which commands the lake well to the west end near the outlet. At that time the northward migration of the caribou was on, and Ostinitsu and his band, to the number of about twenty-five all told, were spearing the deer at the east end of the narrows. The beach was strewn with carcasses, and the deer were still coming.

An interval of four years had passed, when on the 4th of August, 1910, our party of four reached Mistinipi, camping on a well shut-off little bay on the north side, a mile or two from the east end of the lake. We had only one canoe for the four of us, two of the party walking the shores, and the other two navigating with the baggage.

The plan worked well on the whole, with some inconveniences, the arrangement lightening the portage work, and enabling very complete observations of the country by the foot party, which went over the hills and was able to see a good deal of the country and whatever signs there were of game and Indians. In all such travel, by the way, it is the man who goes afoot who really knows the country, rather than the one who goes by canoe. The party was made up of Scoville Clark, with whom the trip was planned, and George P. Howe and D. G. McMillan, who fell in by invitation on the way.





A FOOD SCAFFOLD



CRUSHED MARROWBONES FROM PERHAPS A THOUSAND DEER



The old deer crossing at the narrows showed still a lot of bleached horns, but the long windrow at the first camp of 1906, a little southward, had disappeared — of course into the lake. This disposal counts as an offering to the powers that rule the chase; without some such observance the surviving deer will be offended and avoid the hunters. Why the horns at the second camp were not likewise put into the lake I am not quite sure; probably because the people were there so long a time that the spirits animating the horns had departed from them, after which eventuality they need not be held in respect. A long stay of the Indians almost surely occurred, for in 1906 they had a year's meat laid in when I left them, and would not have their usual motive for moving, that of following the deer, until at least the next summer.

A strong deadfall had been built, probably for wolverenes, foxes, and the like, possibly for wolves too. A great lot of broken up marrowbones had accumulated; they had been boiled and reboiled. What we saw may have represented the leg bones of a thousand deer. This of itself would show that the camp had been kept there a very long time.

We followed the northern shore of the lake. There are three deep bays on that side leading toward passes in the hills east. In the second or third of these was even the standing poles of a winter lodge, as if used for cross-country travel in the direction of Davis Inlet. The winter route to that place is much shorter than the summer one.

A good many deer had summered over the country, though in a scattered way, but most of them had recently moved north. Hunting with

the rifle among the hills had gone on at some time a year or two back, probably in 1907, and skulls and parts of skulls with horns attached were rather frequent beyond the narrows. Some of the horns were fine specimens, but all had been killed in the velvet, were now weathered white and porous, and were as light as cork. There were a few bear and wolf tracks in the paths, not many, and the bears were small.

The second day on Mistinipi McMillan and I, circling far inland to flank the deep bays, missed the canoe and walked by it. The next thing we came to, as luck would have it, was a chain of impassable ponds running inland several miles, and these we had to go around, in one of the hottest days and the worst for flies that I remember that year. We had no luncheon beyond a mouthful, and I, having footed it from the high portage nearly to the foot of Mistinipi without any boating, at the same time making my portages with the others, had more than enough of it. Coming out on a point about the middle of the afternoon we made a strong smoke, putting on much moss, and before long saw the canoe break around a point two or three miles behind and come on fast for the smoke. Curiously, just before the canoe really did appear I was perfectly sure I saw it in another place. It was some deer swimming along a far-away shore.

The moral of the episode is first that one ought never to separate from the commissary without at least two rations in hand, and some fishing tackle — a hook and line at least. We had a gun but very few cartridges, and if really lost from the canoe party might have been a day or two without anything to eat. We did have matches. Another thing to remember is that if two parties are to

meet on unknown ground it may become important for one or the other, on arriving, to put up a signal visible from far. In this case we walkers were thrown back into the country two miles by deep, narrow bays, and though the canoe stopped at an old lodge which was visible enough to us at luncheon time, and the other men were lying inside it, even McM.'s good eyes could not detect anything more than the white standing poles. If a tent or white blanket had been spread upon the poles we could have seen it in the sunshine five or six miles away.

As it was we came rather near going through the experience of getting a raft together in a bad place for timber, with no axe, to get across the ponds. The most feasible way to do it was to adopt McM.'s suggestion of tying the raft together with our underclothes, a daunting proposition, for such were the flies that we could hardly get along with all our clothes on.

Toward evening — this was the 6th — we came to a long chain of lakes leading northeast from the main lake; they had to be crossed and all got into the canoe at once. It brought the weight up to about nine hundred pounds, and this in a fifty-six-pound canoe, only fifteen feet long. If the ratio of weight of vehicle to cargo was ever brought lower I should like to know where.

There was some question where to look for the portage route at the end of the lake. My Indian maps of 1905 and 1906 were out of reach when I left home, and I could only remember that by various Indian accounts the route swung somewhat toward the north, and I had some doubt lest the chain of lakes referred to was the route. We talked it over and decided to look along the main

lake for the outlet anyway. This proved right, and a short portage led to more lakes stretching off west; these were evidently our nearest way to the George, whether the Indians went that way or not. There were, however, a good many Indian signs, poles, etc.,—"Metukuf" in the vernacular, about the outlet.

The outlet is a smart rapid which we did not try to run. At the shore we were met by the most suffocating cloud of black flies I have ever seen. Eyes and nose were instantly full, and we had to make a smoke in as few seconds as possible. One can really work a good deal of actual destruction on flies of either kind by keeping a smart fire going. So it had been that day earlier when Howe and I made a mere wisp of a fire on a rock while waiting for the canoe to bring up my camera, left a mile behind. The water around the rock was calm, and we could see the singed mosquitoes as they floated. In about half an hour they looked to count at least ten thousand, and there were visibly fewer about. Again, the day before this, I sat waiting some twenty minutes for McM. to return from hunting up some other left-behind thing, and amused myself killing off what mosquitoes I could as they lit on my hands and trousers, and by the time I was done they were quite thinned out. Still I was batting pretty fast for awhile. They will shower into a broad, hot fire after dark, like a snowstorm when very thick. Heat is worse for them than smoke; one can lie close up to a wide, thin fire and be let alone. In a very hot sun they are noticeably inert.

This camp, at the foot of the short rapid, was on a smooth, velvety piece of ground, in no way suggestive of flies, but the place became referred



AT DAVIS INLET



A DEAD FALL, MISTINIPI, 1910





to always afterward as Mosquito Point. There was some swale ground just beyond which may have accounted for the trouble. Other camps came to have names that were never bestowed as such; one was the "Windy" camp, another the "Comfort" camp, but the names began as common adjectives; we never set out to name anything.

McM. caught a good *namaycush* on the fly in the eddy, and shot an old herring gull very handsomely next morning, across the river; it went into the kettle. When the morning came I begged for a Sunday, a day off, for I had had more walking than the others, and we proceeded to take it easy, though the calm, beautiful morning was too good to waste. H. and I went up a symmetrical, smooth hill northeast, and took observations. It looked eight or ten miles west a little north to the end of the second lake, the last one visible, and that was evidently our best course to the George. While we were about camp a tremendous wolf came to the shore across, looking as large as a moderate caribou. We were not sure for a moment but he was a caribou. He passed without hesitation into the strong water and swam toward us with head high. When forty or fifty yards away some one must have moved — we were somewhat conspicuous from being above and on the sky line — for he turned and swam back. Reaching shore he paused not an instant, but took to a lope and disappeared. In the water he showed a grand, massive head and back, and swam with power.

By luncheon time H., who had not walked much for three days, became uneasy to be off, and my good resolves to be prudent yielded. We made a small lake and a large one before camping,

all four in the boat, and so disposed continued for a week or two, though low in the water and crowded, until we were back at the high portage, where our other canoe was. The country became flat and less interesting to the west, and the lakes, called by the Indians Kanekaútsh, meaning probably Sand Lake, or something of the sort, are shallow. The lakes are rather stony than sandy, however, save for a point where the lodges were generally placed. There were many sets of standing poles. By midday, the 8th, the three lakes were behind.

At the end of the last one we met a party of twenty Indians, most of whom I knew, going to the coast from Tshinutivish. They were Ostinitsu, Minowish, Puckway, my old but doubtful friend, young Edward, of 1906 history, and three or four women and girls. They met us with great civility, but we had little to entertain them with, tobacco or tea, and I think they were disappointed. At the post we had been told that they were all near the coast, and we had taken nothing for them. Off they went, in an hour or so, we going the other way on foot with a man and boy who were returning to Tshinutivish, six or seven miles northwesterly. Our guide was not enthusiastic about our going along, though as a matter of course we would naturally go by his place when we moved camp. But as the river was hard to travel, having, as various Indians explained, many rapids, we decided merely to make an afternoon walk to Tshinutivish and back and then return to the coast.

Our guide took us a mile west to a rocky hill promontory and pointed out Tshinutivish Hill, still some miles away. The word means Little-

Long-Brain, and has a fair basis of resemblance. When the man started off I told him we would go too. He took it well enough, but the walk was a ludicrous affair. Our Indian, I imagine, took his course with the idea of looking for game on his way, or perhaps it was his sense of humor that inspired him; at any rate, he led through more swamps and over more bad ground generally than we had seen for a long time. He had given me, for one, a pretty sharp walk to the lookout hill, though I kept up well that far. Now, with his long legs, he made a spectacle of all of us in the swamps and bushes. H., very near sighted, had broken his only pair of glasses, and wearing a net too, could not see the ground, and was soon out of sight behind. We were in a long procession. Now and then I called to the man not to hurry, that the doctor could not see; then he would smile gently and pause a little. He stepped slowly with his thin legs and without effort, but at no time were we really in the running at all. The young boy had no trouble keeping up, but circled about like a puppy. Showers came, one long and effective, and we were wet and done up by the time we got to the river. We were loaded, all, into a fine canvas canoe, myself distinguished by being permitted one of the two paddles, and were soon across the Tshinutivish estuary.

Several persons came down from the lodges, one a barefooted man of some presence, in red leggings. Of course my Indian words failed, as they generally do with Naskapi I have not talked with before. I tried to say we wanted to sleep there. The word was right enough, *nipan* it is in at least three kindred dialects, but here it looked as if it meant not to sleep, but to get married. There was a

roar from the men, and disturbance, with some scattering, among the women. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Most of the people drifted back to the lodges. We were wet and getting cold. Finally I got at the older man, explained that we could not go back that night and wanted shelter. He pointed to his lodge and said we could go there. Presently we went in. It was a matter of course, anyway, I imagine. The lodge was large, of near fifty poles, with seven or eight persons inside, mostly women and children. It would have held twenty persons, I should say, sleeping as they do, like spokes of a wheel, with feet to the fire in the middle. One side of the tent was given to us visitors. We took off more or less of our wet things and hung them to dry.

Presently a white cloth went down in front of us, the size of a towel, and a few ordinary glazed ware dishes, followed in time by some extremely good boiled whitefish. Dried caribou meat, equally good, was handed about, and tea. After some rummaging a little salt was found, a thimbleful or two; they do not eat it themselves as a habit. Our host tried to talk, but I could not make much of it and he gave up disgusted. He was mainly concerned about the Mistúkushu, the deer migration. Had we seen it? I was sorry to have to tell him not, that the deer were scattered and not very many.

Their outlook for the winter seemed bad; their scaffolds were low. All the men looked hard worked, the women, on the other hand, fuller than when I saw them at Mistinipi in 1906. So it goes, one side of the house or the other is always having the worst of it. In 1906 the men were fat



TSHINUTIVISH



and the women thin and overworked upon the abundant and easily got meat and skins of the Mistúkushu.

After supper the neighbors came in, mostly women whose men had gone to the shore. My old acquaintances of 1906, every one, brought presents of meat and skins and moccasins, nor had they lost their pleasing manners I remembered. We could only thank them then, having brought nothing from our camp.

What went on in the course of the evening brought to us as real a phase of the primitive life as I had seen. While we were eating the people roasted whitefish over the fire, the children in particular chewed the dried meat. There was no vegetable food; whitefish and dried deer meat were all.

We were given skins and blankets for the night. The puckered deerskins of the lodge dripped a little as it came on to rain, and I had to wriggle about for a dry place. Some one kept a little fire, putting on wood when necessary, and we were wholly comfortable. Breakfast was of dried meat boiled. By the time it was done with the sun came out and we wandered about the place.

Howe particularly pleased the old women, though nothing could be said between them. Mc-Millan, with his gift for boys, had his following of them there as at home, Clark wandered at large, and helped me change films. On my part, I used the camera as best I could. The tension of the time, with forty Naskapi about, was plain upon most of our unaccustomed party; I felt it myself, and after I was pretty well around with the kodak, one of my friends, and of great Eskimo experience at that, came to me and said with growing inten-

sity, "Now we've stayed over night and we've seen everything, you've got your photographs — *let's go!*"

I photographed one quiet, oldish man, using my spectacles to see the focusing scale with. He reached out apologetically for them and tried them on the cloth of my sleeve. His face brightened to see so well, and he handed them back a little wistfully. I explained that they were all I had. Later I remembered that there were more in my kit at camp, and on leaving him to step into the canoe I pulled them out of my pocket and handed them to him. I like to remember his look. A beggarly gift in a way, yet something after all for one whose eyes have failed.

Almost at once came running good old Nijwa, to whom on old scores I owed more than any mere spectacles — came running for a pair too, but I had to tell her I had no more. In truth, I ought to have sent my last pair back to her from our camp.

We were soon off. All the people gathered at the shore and stood silent as we started, waving as we made the distance, as is their custom to guests. Our host of the night was with us, also our guide of yesterday, and two boys, their sons. I had told them that if they would come over I would give them some silver I had.

Tshinutivish is a few miles down from the head of Mûshauau Nipi, Barren Ground Lake. There was an Hudson's Bay Company post in the little estuary under the hill at one time, but the expense of supplying it was too great, the river below being very hard to ascend. It has no important falls, but a tremendous incline leading down a thousand feet or more. John McLean brought up a heavy



boat about 1840, and his discovery of the Grand Falls was made from Chimo by way of this lake. Erlandson, prior to McLean, doubtless knew it well. Mrs. Hubbard passed it in 1905, Dillon Wallace later the same year.

The Kanekautsh lakes we had traversed were doubtless known to the people of the former post, but it is not likely that they went far east, and our journey was almost certainly the first that has been made by whites from the coast to the George itself, certainly the first of which there is record. The best of the country, however, is the belt explored by Quackenbush and myself along the height of land. With its beautiful white moss hills and fine lakes it is one of the best wild places left anywhere. But for the mosquitoes it would be a rare place in which to travel, as has been elsewhere intimated; indeed, but for their most effective guardianship of the shore the inland would doubtless have been explored long ago. As it is, a warm weather trip there merely for pleasure, as one ordinarily goes to wild places, is not worth while.

It was on the 9th of August we left Tshinutivish, a sunny, cool day. The Indians took us always over high, firm ground, if a little roundabout, consulting now and then how they would better go, and keeping us well out of swamps and calm fly pockets. The two men, who may have been brothers, talked with a pleasant rather rapid utterance much of the way. They were discussing the deer situation, with them all in all, and were anxious. The season was well on and there was no sign of the deer coming together. I would have given much to be able to understand all they said; the epic of the life was in it. There

were a good many deer, the country over, but by one of their mysterious impulses they might all vanish and go a hundred or two miles as if in some wireless way the word had been passed among them. The people had little food ahead. By the turn of the year the fish would go dormant in deep water and the desolate snow barrens would be lifeless. They could keep to the east side of the country and escape the worst by falling upon the trading posts, but the country on that side was empty of deer now, and had not had many since 1903. Moreover, for the whole population to come upon outside resources would be a strain on the usual coast supply of provisions. On that side of the country there was little fur, moreover, to pay for their food. Grave questions these, and the lives of many, women and children and men, depended on the judgment of a few older heads — and upon fate. No wonder they make their offerings to the powers that can either withhold the deer entirely or send them in thousands to cover the hills!

As we walked and talked a doe and fawn took our track somewhere behind, and, caribou fashion, followed us along not far back, stepping high and lightly and beautiful in the sunshine, starting and stopping ready to flee. When they saw us turn and look they halted, and when an Indian went back for a shot they took themselves safely away.

Arrived at the lake, we got out our kit and cooked for all. The Indians had cooked for us, now we cooked for them. Our good pemmican they appreciated, and the bread and tea. We were all leisurely, there was time and sunshine, and the day was ours. When the meal was over I shook out my bag of odds and ends and found



IN A TSHINUTIVISH LODGE



HAIR SKINS, MISTINIPI, 1906, (See Page 238)



the silver. They looked it over, talked, and were cheerful. From inside their coats, after all seemed done, they pulled out little fawn skins for us, and I had to scrape together the last few dimes to meet the occasion. Then casually, and without words, they rose and strolled away; I set my camera scale and waited for their figures to rise upon the horizon. Arriving there, each Indian mounted one of the large boulders which stood sharp against the sky and all waved high their long arms for a little. We waved in return and they vanished.

There was nothing more for us at Kanekautsh, and we departed, still four in the small canoe. We were anxious to be over the large lakes; the bays were deep, the country flat and scrubby, and not very good to travel afoot. There was some forty miles of large-water navigation, broken by three short portages, to the head of Mistinipi. At the east end of the first lake, McM. and I took a couple of time-sights for longitude, the most valuable sights of the trip. Howe had taken two double altitudes at Mosquito Point on the 7th, but the meridian one was doubtful. A pan of bacon fat is not bad for a horizon when the sun is warm enough to keep it fluid, but there was air enough stirring to ruffle its surface whenever the job came to a contact. The worst was mosquitoes, dropping into the pan in droves and descending upon H.'s succulent face and hands whenever the breeze let up.

The "red sun" was plain enough to catch, coming direct, but the reflected one through the green glass was hard to find, and between wind and flies the observation was doubtful. It was an inhuman spectacle — H., the sensitive one of us

to flies, jumping with torture, but holding himself desperately to the sacrifice, looking to the last for a green sun in a frying pan!

At Kanekautsh the time-sights were quickly made, and we kept on up the large lake until the sun was well under. Then a curious episode occurred. Ahead less than a mile a canoe, which we took for one of Ostinitsu's, or possibly of strange Indians, came around a point and made directly our way, presently swinging so as to cross our course a quarter of a mile ahead, but going steadily and fast. We could see no paddles in the underlight, and some one appeared to be standing. Then we saw that it was nearer than it had seemed and that there was something wrong, and in truth weird about it. Whatever the manifestation was it paid no attention to us. By this time we were all mystified and at a loss. Once it was by we turned in chase, and before long saw that it was simply a huge pair of antlers carried by a stag low down in the water. Soon our four paddles overhauled him, and as we needed meat McMillan, in the bow, killed him neatly near the shore.

The illusion of a canoe, and then the impression of something outside one's daylight experience, had been remarkably definite and identical with us all. If the apparition had passed behind a point in the first eight or ten minutes we should always have counted it a canoe, after that heaven knows what. We should have had something to argue about for all time.

This was the only large game shot during the trip. We were fresh meat hungry. The liver bore our first onslaught; it would not do to say how many pounds we ate before noon next day, when





A TSHINUTIVISH LODGE. BROILING A WHITEFISH



we started on again. The liver cannot well be bettered in summer, however in winter, and even then the deer's barren ground diet of starchy white moss may maintain its quality. In southern regions the deer kind change wholly as the snow deepens, the liver becomes blue, knurly, and bad to eat. So even with the solid meat then, that of the woodland caribou at least becoming hard and black after long feeding on the old-men's beards of tree moss; the flesh then smells of fermented moss, and does not keep well; even pickled it spoils soon unless the bones are taken out.

For a few days our meat improved, until the solid, thick collops that we roasted on sticks, each for himself, seemed beyond anything we had ever fallen upon. Clark and I had them without salt, Indian fashion, and were sure they were best that way. With time to lie about and give one's self up to the business of digestion there seems no limit to the amount one can eat and the frequency with which one can turn to it again. But one cannot play anaconda and do hard traveling at the same time. When steady on the road one needs more concentrated food, not much of it at a time, and better if what there is of it is comparatively indigestible.

That year we had good fortune on sea, land, and lakes. From Turnavik, where the Invermore put us out in disappointment at her untimely turning back, to the foot of Kanekautsh, whatever wind blew was with us. Now, going eastward again, we had no head wind of account all the way to Davis Inlet, near two hundred miles. Never was such persistent luck. Still, with the little canoe, it was kittle work crossing large bays. Mostly we followed far in and around, for the

boat was like a log, and the shorter waves passed from end to end without lifting her. Sometimes the temptation to cut across a bay was too much, and then, sometimes, we needed all our little free-board, all. If a strong push of wind had followed us a mile we would have filled. There was little or no room to bail. Howe and Clark sat on the bottom with light packs actually laid upon their legs. What they would have done if things had gone wrong is not too easy to see. I was uneasy for myself at times, though high up at the steering paddle.

A secondary object of the trip, after the carrying the Tshinutivish route through, was to look up the large lake on the head of Mistastin. I thought we could find it without much trouble, from what Indians had told me. We left the second lake east of the height of land August 13th, going afoot for the highest hill in sight, some six or eight miles away and somewhat west of south. There had been some discussion as to having time enough. The rest of the party feared missing their October engagements. I demurred, suggested their keeping on to the coast, and urged them to do so, but to leave me the small canoe at the high portage to get out with; it was only twenty miles away. Finally they decided to stay, and we started for Mistastin with two or three days' supplies. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon.

By five or six we reached the far hill, and Mistastin, a large spreading lake, was plainly visible off to the south. We made a sky camp, with good northern lights, in a wooded valley on toward the lake. It was nearer to a non-mosquito night than any other we had on the plateau save at Tshinutivish. The way on to the lake was poor,

along a rough valley side, with flies and bushes, and only occasional deer paths to follow. Near the lake McM. concluded to take a half day off, and the rest of us kept on three or four miles to a remarkable trap headland where I had been told the old-time Indians got their arrow-head material. There was some good travel, alternating with half-swampy levels, where grew larch, spruce, and alders, and we slopped through two barely passable streams. At the headland Clark's moccasins went through. Howe and I kept on up the hill. The southwest side was of organ-pipe basalt, with a fine, even talus slope below, the northeast corner a flintish-looking, light-colored trap, in small, flat slabs. Service berries were plenty on top and bear tracks to match. The western foot of the hill is skirted by a game trail, where the deer have to go in flanking the west end of the lake. After two hours of exploration we returned to Clark and started back north. I held the way unnecessarily over swampy ground east of our outgoing track, and carelessly came out quite a way east of the baggage. Turning westerly, Clark soon sighted McM. on a far sky line, concerned about us, for it was getting dark.

We made a mile or so north and camped open to the sky again, on the very crest of the country, the wide moss hills of the height of land. The northern lights were remarkable. They shifted over us for hours in bands and curtains, looking marvelously near. I venture that one of the great festoons hung within three or four hundred feet of us.

Westerly from Mistastin the country is low, and in places unusually well timbered with straight larch and spruce. One could build canoes and

rafts at will. The great flow down Mistastin valley anciently is accounted for by this wide depression at its head. The headland we had visited is the striking remnant of a great erupted dike which has been torn through from west. I had seen porous gray basalt, probably from this dike, about the Assiwaban Forks for years without knowing its source. The Mistastin River takes the course of a great Z from the lake to the Assiwaban, with a deep cañon and high falls. The lake itself is probably at least twelve miles long and six or seven wide, with bold shores everywhere save at the west end. A high, long island, looking eruptive, rises in the west half, the rest of the lake being open. It is the finest piece of water I have seen in the Northeast, though not really very large; nothing of it would seem to have been known before.

We took a straightish course back, making one high lift, but escaping many ridge-crossings, and saving some actual distance over our outward trip. But I, for one, was tired; the last few miles, though with only a moderate pack, dragged a good deal. I had missed a good deal of sleep when the others were doing well. Once back at our base camp I slumped down limp while the others cooked caribou. We all had a long afternoon of lying about.

Next day we were off for the coast, all in tune and surprisingly springy. Caribou collops had picked us up. We passed several ponds quickly, half running the portages. At the kettle-boiling on a little pond along came Ostinitsu, with two other Indians and a boy; the rest of his party had taken a more westerly route. The little party spent an hour with us and were off west. At dark we were well toward the high portage.

We had cached two pieces of bacon near the top of the portage, one in a tree and the other in a cold pond, and were interested to see what had happened to them; the weather had been far from cold, and after the sixteen days' absence we had not much hope of the water bacon. Indeed it was slimy and pretty bad, though the inner part would have done at a pinch. The outside would have needed real starvation for a sauce. The tree bacon, which had escaped enemies from above and below, seemed to have actually sweetened in the cool, clean air, and was rather improved.

The Natua-ashu gave us a cuffing; a northwester came on as we started in. We kept close to the north shore for safety, but the small canoe Clark and I had required bailing. We held on, riding for a fall; there was little to risk at this stage of the trip. At the very last point was a little hook bight, beyond which we would be safe. I had not cared to go out around far, with our low freeboard, and was keeping well in, when, just in the bight, three large waves came; if there were more behind, things would go hard. We tried to turn the point, a mistake — I should rather have driven straight ashore. A squall kept the waves coming, actually broaching the larger canoe full into the trough, without filling her, however. Our fate was different, the boat filled, turned over instantly, and we had to swim for it. There was no trouble getting ashore, but the rifle and other sinkable kit went down in eight or nine feet of water.

There was plenty of driftwood behind the lee of some alders, and we spent the rest of the day there, from ten o'clock, drying out and resting. In the calm of the next morning we hooked up the

derelict stuff. What a hook would not catch a wire snare on a stick did.

Our trap boat, bought from Captain Bartlett at Turnavik, was waiting at Winter's, and in two days we worked our way to Geer's. The boat was slow and heavy, albeit known to us as the "Lady Maud," but we came to a sort of affection for her. For a few hours getting to Geer's place we had a head wind, the only one of that miraculously wind-favored trip.

Tom Geer and his wife helped us to Davis Inlet, fifteen miles, and showed us what intimate knowledge of tides would do. We rowed or paddled, all six of us, till the heavy craft moved like a thing of life; currents and a final wind did more, and we made port in a wonderfully short time. On our own resources we might have taken a day or more.

We were glad to rest two or three days in the willing hands of Mr. Johnson, the new agent, who helped us on later. We had brought some souvenirs from the Indian camp, but in experienced hands at the post they were soon boiled out. (Mem.: Some sulpho-naphthol for insects is worth having along to save boiling one's woolens.) Wind and rain put us ashore a night in Flowers' Bay, and a northwester following, a cracking wind, made us glad to change from the open boat to a schooner in Windy Tickle. We caught the *Stella Maris* at Hopedale by a scratch, but not too late to dine with the Lenzes at the Mission.

The 1910 trip was a fair success. The strong party, perhaps physically the most capable, and without professional packers the best equipped of any that has gone into the peninsula, was very effective and hard to stop. We did not work very

long days, though taking it by and large all had work enough, and every one at one time or another showed signs of wear.

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On coming out we were surprised to learn that an expedition had gone into the country from Nain at about the time we started in by the Assiwaban. The travelers were Mr. Hesketh Prichard and Mr. Hardie, with their guide, Porter. They paralleled our route at a distance from it of some twenty miles, reaching the Barren Ground Lake ten days after we did. They saw no Indians. The ground they traversed is somewhat higher and more rocky than along the Assiwaban, with fewer lakes, and withal should be better suited to a foot trip. Much of this country was more or less distantly viewed by one and another of us in 1904 and 1905, from elevations along our way, in particular from the hills about Mistinipi.

In 1911 the Indian country was unvisited by any white person, so far as I can learn. McMillan made a long canoe trip on the coast, but did not go inland. At Davis Inlet he saw one or two of old E.'s family and a chance Naskapi. After all, the people had managed to pull through the winter, and in the spring had a great migration at Mistinipi. They speared a thousand deer.

Now, in November, the snow is over the country, there is meat for the winter, and the lodge life at its best is going on in the sheltered bays. In such times of plenty the Indian life is peculiarly attractive, perhaps more so than the life of any other hunter race that survives on earth. The people are lords over their fine country, asking

little favor, ever, save that the deer may come in their time. It was one of the notable privileges of my wilderness days to have the best of their country to myself for some years, unexplored as it was, and even more to me was the relation with the people themselves.

They are all east of the George now; all that I know who are living. Old Ostinitsu is there surely, for he is tough; and Nahpayo, who "sees far," with his pretty young wife. Pakuun-noh, a good man, is gone; he is hunting in an easier world now. His wife is with the others; her son, Fox-boy, with his father's and mother's gentleness, must be getting a large boy now. Puckway is there, with his friendly eyes, Ashimáganish, Kámoques, Pi-á-shun-a-hwáo, and straight old Nijwa, who has outlived her looks.

They are all there, where the nights are already long, and the snow flashes keen to the northern lights. There is plenty now, the children's faces are round; there is plenty for the burnt offerings, always of the best — and the people do not forget. There is plenty to offer Ki-wáy-tin-o-shúh, the god of the Northwind and Snow, in these days of his growing power. Now are the Maquish, the Little People, hidden in their rocks, now are the Under-water People sleeping the winter away. The wide snowshoes come and go, the tracks of the long tapákuu ribbon the winter ways. Little the people are asking. Their country still is theirs, and the deer; and long may they so remain.



# APPENDIX

## MICE

THE part played by that humble creature, one might easily say humble nuisance, the mouse, in the economy of barren ground life, has been touched upon in previous pages. With the caplin of the coast waters, and the rabbit, the varying hare of the forested North, creatures existing mainly to feed their predatory superiors, the mouse has an importance quite beyond its apparent insignificance.

The mouse of the barrens is rather square built, about the size of a common field mouse, with a shortish, stumpy tail. Like the rabbit it increases in numbers through a term of years and suddenly disappears. The rabbits at least are known to die off from a disease like anthrax. In years of their scarcity districts where there are no lakes to provide a fish supply are not hunted by the Indians, who seek other grounds. In these years the lynx, the chief rabbit hunter of all, is said not to breed. The hardship of the rabbit's absence is felt also by the martens, whose Indian name, by the way, is Wapistan, "Rabbit-hunter," as well as by the birds of prey and other hunting creatures.

In like manner the caplin governs the movements of the cod, and probably certain of the whales. It has been held that the recent destruction of whales from the stations at Hawk Harbor and Cape Charles, on the Labrador, has affected the cod fishing through the caplin as intermediary. The idea is that the whales drive the caplin inshore, and the cod follow in where they can be caught. Now, with the thinning out of the whales, it is thought that the caplin and cod tend to remain out at sea where they cannot be reached. On this theory, I have been told, whaling has been restricted in certain Norwegian waters, and similar legislation has been suggested for Labrador.

Perhaps as many creatures depend upon mice as upon either rabbit or caplin, although people, indeed, rarely eat them. Indirectly they may play as important a part in the concerns of the Indians as the rabbit itself; and this although,

in the fur countries at least, one may well touch his hat with respect when the name of the Indians' "Little White One" is mentioned.

In 1903, my first year in the country, mice were not noticeably plenty. Caribou had been abundant through the winter, by early July passing north in large numbers close to the coast. There were some falcons about, the splendid light-colored gyrfalcons, besides broad-winged hawks, dark and almost equally fierce. Both kinds breed in cliffs about the islands. I saw few ptarmigan, the one with chicks at Jim Lane's being all I remember; however, I spent little time inland that year. Foxes, the most important fur game, were fairly plenty.

By 1904 mice were distinctly abundant. Hawks were more numerous, the white ones shrilling from many cliffs as we approached their nests. It was that year, I think, perhaps the next, that foxes were noted by the shore people as being scattered and shy; they would not take bait. As to the trout up river I do not remember, but they probably made something of their chance at the mice. If, however, the mice take to the water mainly when migrating, the trout may not have had many that year.

Ptarmigan were fairly numerous. The wolverene we shot was full of mice. There were no caribou to speak of. We saw a good many wolf tracks, chiefly along the river banks, where mice are apt to be, but heard no wolves at night. There were some hawks and a few owls all the way inland.

The next year, 1905, was the culminating year of the mice. Sometimes two at a time could be seen in the daylight. Low twigs and all small growth were riddled by them. There was a tattered aspect about the moss and ground in many places not quite pleasant to see. We saw few mice in the river, but perhaps they swam nights. Falcons had increased visibly, nesting on most cliffs from Cape Harrigan to Mistinipi, a hundred and fifty miles distance. Owls were not many, but had increased somewhat; we saw only one snowy owl. All trout of more than a half pound had mice inside. Ptarmigan were very plenty, and the wolves — we may have seen the tracks of two hundred — were silent still. The bear of the trip was full of mice. He was very fat, as doubtless the other predatory animals and birds were. They were in

much the situation of some of us Vermont children one year when blackberries were unusually thick; the bushes were hanging with them, and all we had to do was to walk up to them with hands down and "eat with our mouths." Caribou were still scarce, even on George River, and foxes plenty.

In the spring of 1906 the mice disappeared with the snow. The local impression was that they moved away at these times, but such is almost always the prevailing belief, whether as to buffalo, caribou, or fish, in fact any sort of game. It is possible that they did move, but if so one ought to hear of their reappearing somewhere occasionally in large numbers, and so far as I learn this is not their way.

With the vanishing of the mice the change in the visible life of the country was remarkable. The falcon cliffs were deserted, coast and inland. Where the birds had gone none could say. They had seemed to belong to the country. We felt the absence of their superb flights and cries.

In the trout reaches of the Assiwaban fish were numerous, but they were living on flies now, with what minnows they could get, and were no longer mousey, but sweet and good. No owls appeared; there had, however, never been very many. Our bear of the year was living on berries, and did not smell beary or greasy when we skinned him; the meat was singularly sweet and well flavored.

Ptarmigan were all but wanting, old birds and young. It is fair to suppose that in previous years they were let alone by their natural enemies in the presence of the superabundant mouse supply, and were enabled to increase to their unusual numbers of 1905. Their enemies — birds, wolves, foxes, wolverenes and what not, increased also. For two or three years they had had only to sit down and eat. Now, in a plight with the disappearance of the mice, they harried the ptarmigan to nearly the last egg and feather. We missed their evening crowing in the scrub.

The refuse of the deer crossing at Mistinipi gathered many of the animals and the ravens. Sixty wolverene skins came to Davis Inlet post that year, where eight or ten would come ordinarily.

For the first time we heard the wolves nights, a far, high-pitched howl — their hunting cry. I suppose it is for the ears of the caribou. Uneasy, they move, a track is left for the wolf to find, and sooner or later the chase is on. There had

been no need of thus stirring up the game from a distance in the mouse hunt.

Whether the caribou may not have kept out of the country because the mice were in possession is a question. The ravelled moss and other leavings of the mice were a little unpleasant to our eyes, perhaps also to the sensitive nose and taste of the caribou, as sheep ground is to the larger grazing animals. I have long suspected that the caribou did not care to feed along with the mice. It is possible, however, that being let alone by the wolves in the south while the latter were sitting among the mice in the north, the caribou merely stayed passively where they were. The absence of Indians in the southern part of the deer range would also support the idea that their being undisturbed had to do with their staying there. Once the wolves found themselves upon the hard times of early 1906 they may have sought the caribou and stirred them to move. They certainly did move, as the twelve or fifteen hundred carcasses at Mistinipi that year went to show.

The bearing of the mouse situation on the human interests of the region are easy to see. It affected all the game, food game and fur. The abundance of mice tended to build up the ptarmigan, which are of vital importance in the winter living of the Indians through the whole forested area to the Gulf. Likewise it built up the caribou herd by providing easier game than they for the wolves.

The departure of the mice did the reverse, reducing the deer and ptarmigan, but it may have brought the deer migration as suggested, giving at any rate an easy year to the hard-pressed Indians of the George. At last they had good food and new clothes and lodges, in all of which necessities they had gone very low. They killed too many deer at Mistinipi, still very many passed south again the next year. There have been deer in the country ever since, with not many mice.

All in all it is hard to imagine any other natural change which would have affected the fortunes, sometimes the fate, of all the other creatures of the peninsula, from man to fish, as did the coming and going of the mice during the years from 1903 to 1906. Only fire could have done the like. Nor were the shore people by any means untouched. All their land game came and went, was plenty or wanting, shy

or easily taken, according to the supply of mice. London and St. Petersburg, easily, were affected through their great fur trade.

It would be farfetched to speculate seriously as to the influence of our multitudinous little rodent upon the fish and whales of the deep sea, even if there were any such thing as tracing these matters to their final end. A run of mice, nevertheless, may make itself felt quite beyond adjacent sea waters. The fish we are concerned with all feed at much the same sea table — the salmon and sea trout that visit the inland, the cod and the whales that do not. Their business, chiefly, is eating, and they are more or less in competition. What one gets another does not. The wellbeing of the anadromous fish, the fish which ascend a hundred rivers, is somewhat at the expense of the other kinds of fish left behind. What one kind eats the others cannot have. In mouse times there are more and larger fish to go back to the sea, if partly because their enemies such as otter and mink neglect fishing for the easy mouse-hut. There are more fresh-water trout left, too, to go down to the bays as they do, and join the hunt for caplin; and again, whatever they get the cod do not, nor the whales.

The gulls may be regarded; they are neighbors, at least, with the fish — the predatory gulls which nest over the inland waters, picking up mice and young birds and all derelict life they can master, all things dead and alive. Their range extends from the cod and caplin swarming passages of the coast archipelago to the far apex of the peninsula at Nichicun.

The falcons? When the mice go and famine comes, do they descend upon the young of the gulls, and vice-versa? Truly the maze of life is complicated!

The year the mice disappeared I was not wholly away from their influence even at home in New Hampshire. They or their ghosts followed as in the old tale of the Mouse Tower. Whether as a case of cause and effect, that winter a remarkable flight of goshawks, the "winter hawks" of the Labrador, moved down upon the northern states, looking for food. There also appeared, so I read at the time, a wide flight of snowy owls. The hawks were a scourge to our native game. One of them used to sit on a high dead limb, commanding a reach of woods behind our family house in Dublin, looking

for partridges, which had become numerous. The partridges could cope well enough with our usual birds of prey, such as hawks and owls, and the ground animals, and had more than held their own for some time. But in the presence of this lightning bolt from the north they were helpless, and were picked up fast. By spring they were about all gone.

In time, if whale and cod, wolverene and wolf, Indian and falcon are not swept from the scene by our remorseless civilization, the important role of such creatures as have been mentioned, the low food-bearers, may be followed through, and what is casual inference, in many fields, may be demonstrated as true cause and result, or, on the other hand, dismissed as unwarranted. We can only put together first coincidences at sight, leaving further observation to determine certainties. The thread of causality traced here is at least more obvious than some outdoor theories that are based upon longer experience; as was, for instance, Spracklin's belief that cod came in well at Fanny's only in years when berries were plentiful on the land. Who shall say? Among the myriad existences of the open there is room for many a thread unseen.





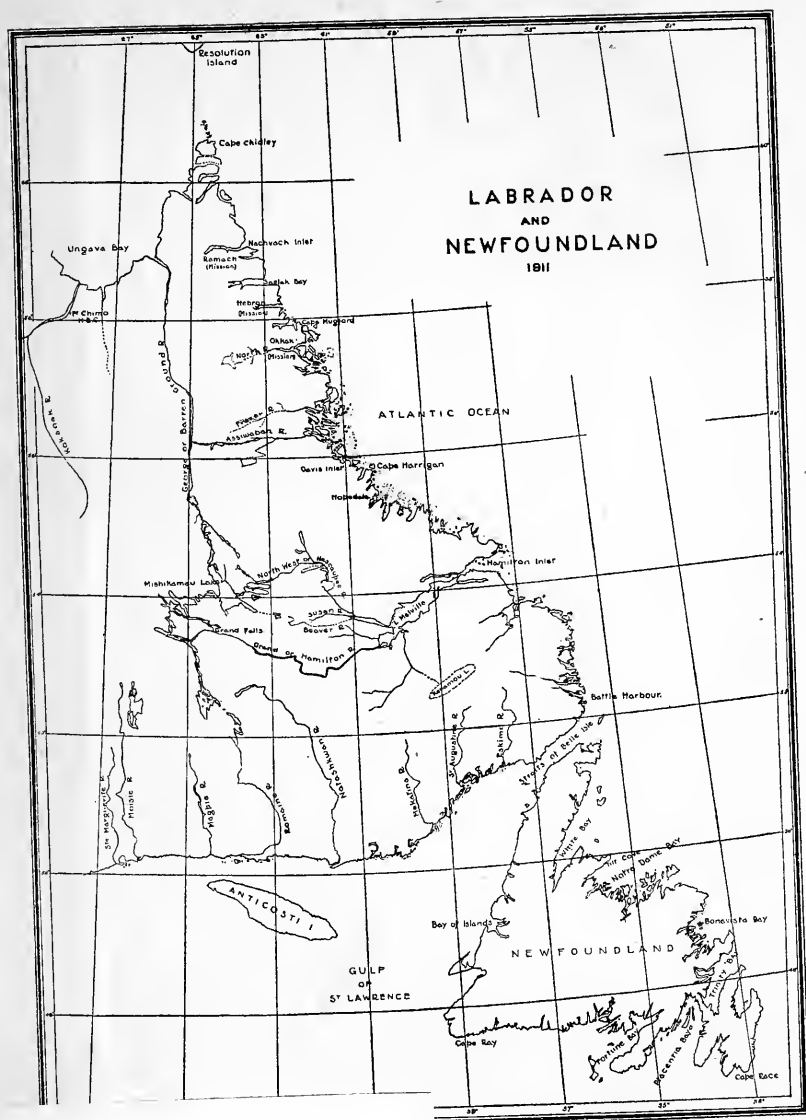








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